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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion.

As the world's population grows, the demand for food and other resources will increase. The world's population is expected to reach 8 billion by the year 2025. This means that there will be 8 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 9 billion by the year 2050. This means that there will be 9 billion people competing for the same resources.

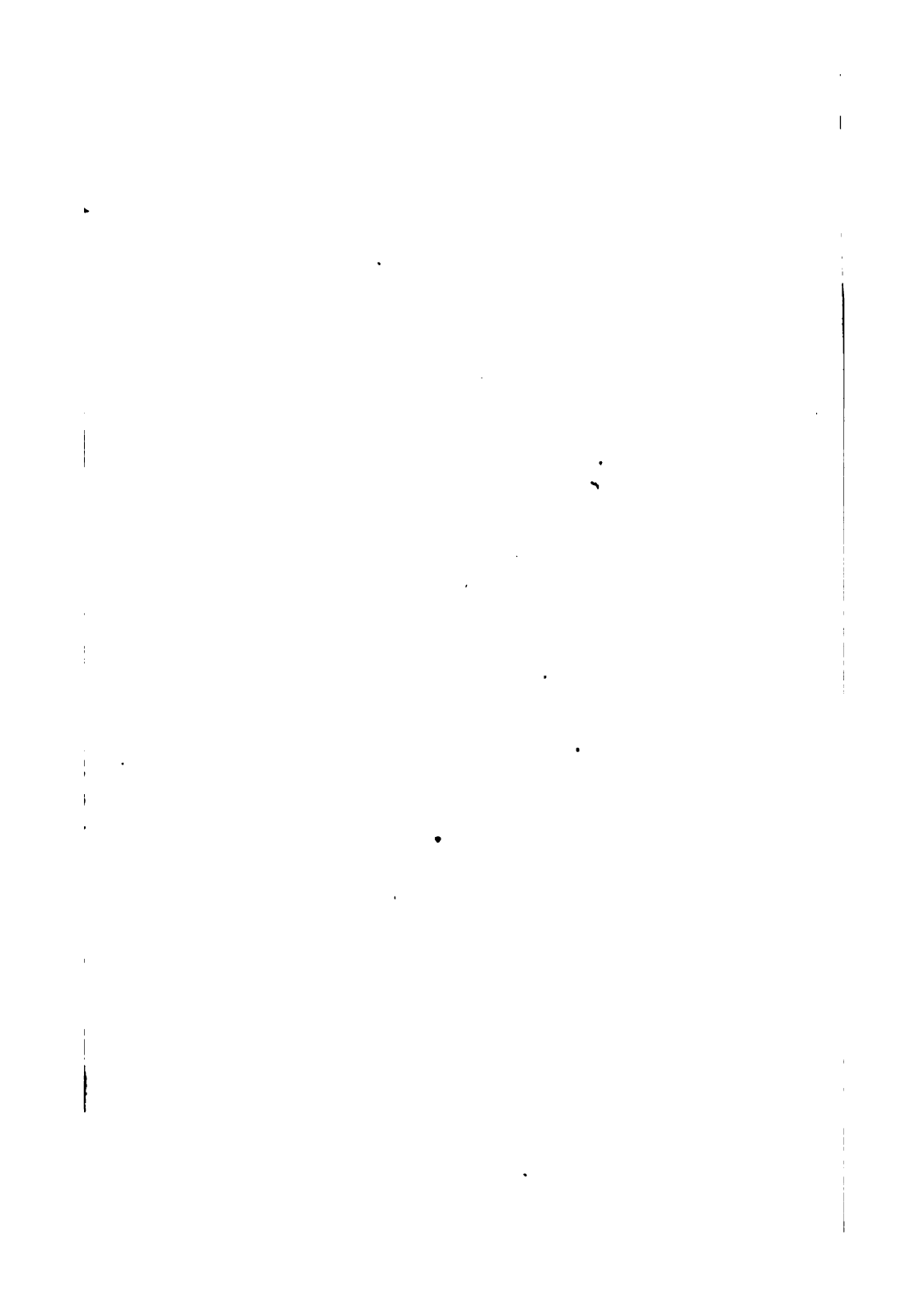
The world's population is expected to reach 10 billion by the year 2100. This means that there will be 10 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 11 billion by the year 2150. This means that there will be 11 billion people competing for the same resources.

The world's population is expected to reach 12 billion by the year 2200. This means that there will be 12 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 13 billion by the year 2250. This means that there will be 13 billion people competing for the same resources.

The world's population is expected to reach 14 billion by the year 2300. This means that there will be 14 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 15 billion by the year 2350. This means that there will be 15 billion people competing for the same resources.

The world's population is expected to reach 16 billion by the year 2400. This means that there will be 16 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 17 billion by the year 2450. This means that there will be 17 billion people competing for the same resources.

The world's population is expected to reach 18 billion by the year 2500. This means that there will be 18 billion people competing for the same resources. The world's population is expected to reach 19 billion by the year 2550. This means that there will be 19 billion people competing for the same resources.



REALMAH.



# REALMAH.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "FRIENDS IN COUNCIL."

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

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# REALMAH.

## CHAPTER IX.

IT was a sunny morning, and several of us were sauntering in the garden for a few minutes before breakfast-time, when Sir John came up to us.

*Ellesmere.* Mind, you must all be “as civil as an orange” to Milverton to-day. If he gives us a reading, you must swear that it is excellent. He has been in such a rage with me.

*Lady Ellesmere.* How wrong it is of you, John, to vex Leonard in this way.

*Ellesmere.* I assure you I did not mean it. Unfortunately we began talking about the Ainah ; and I reminded him of his original description of her. Now you know he has been getting more and more enamoured of her ; and, if he had to describe her again, she would be a perfect beauty. You will see that he will add all manner of beauty to her countenance, if he talks about her again. There will come charming smiles and dimples, and I know not what besides.

[Here Mr. Milverton joined us; and there was an embarrassing silence.]

*Milverton.* I see that Ellesmere has been telling you of the nonsense he has been talking. I did not mean, I did not say, that her hands were extraordinarily large; but, contrasting her in my mind with the high-bred Talora, I was obliged to confess that there were some drawbacks upon her beauty. Hers was one of those countenances which require nice and loving observation to perceive all the merits and the beauties in them. There was a constant play of beautiful expression; there were exquisite dimples; and——

*Ellesmere.* Ha-ha! Did I not tell you so? Am I not a true prophet?

[Here Sir John began dancing about in the wild manner that he frequently indulges in when he is triumphant in some argument.]

*Milverton.* This dancing dervish is not always wrong when he gives us a taste of his prophetic powers.

In one word, the Ainah's was *a very marrying face*.

*Cranmer.* What do you mean, Milverton?

*Milverton.* Why, don't you know, or didn't you know, Cranmer, when you were younger?

You went into a ball-room, and saw two or three great beauties. Haply your eyes fell upon a cosy young couple in some corner. You asked about them, and were told that they were engaged. The girl was not beautiful; but you said to yourself, "The man is right. He is a sensible man: that girl will make a good wife. She will always——"

*Ellesmere.* Make marriage somewhat less painful and disagreeable than it is its nature to be. Now here is a face

[He came behind Lady Ellesmere, and inclosed her face in his big hands—for he has big hands.]

which would insure a happy marriage. You see in it that assurance of perpetual provocation which will not allow a man time to think whether he is happy or not, for he will be in a constant state of warfare. And that is one form, perhaps the best, of happiness for some men.

Here Lady Ellesmere disengaged herself somewhat hastily from his grasp, and we all went to breakfast, laughing heartily.

---

There is some celebrated story of a young man who exclaimed, "And I, too, am a painter!" So now I may say, "And I, too, am an author!" It happened in this way. I had been speaking of some of the curious superstitions which exist in a remote part of Scotland where I, when a boy, had been to visit my relations, who were poor fishing people in that district. Upon this, Sir John Ellesmere declared that Sandy could write a tale if he chose, and that Sandy must choose to do so. It would be a very good thing to employ his mind in that way, and would prevent his spoiling "Realmah" by persuading Milverton to introduce foolish chapters about love.

This was two or three weeks ago. I tried very



hard to think of a subject for a story; but, think as hard as I would, no subject for some time occurred to me. At last, one night, an idea for a story of the supernatural kind did strike me. I told it to Mr. Milverton. He approved of it, and said he would aid me; and so I wrote my little story. I was very shame-faced and nervous when I came to read it before such an audience; but I managed to get through the reading somehow, and my story was much praised. Of course they said everything they could to encourage me. I shall not venture to trouble the reader with the story; but I mention the fact of having written it, as, without doing so, the following conversation would not be understood.

To-day there was a good deal of talk about my story, and afterwards about those strange fancies which have occupied so many minds in all ages, endowing men with gifts and powers in addition to those which they actually possess. Mr. Mauleverer, of course, maintained that this was a proof of the wretched state of man. Sir Arthur declared that it was an instance of the abounding imagination and poetry that there are in all men, women, and children; while Mr. Cranmer contended that these fancies were rather irreverent; that men had better be contented with what they are, and make the best of that, and not indulge in fancies that could never be realized. Sir John Ellesmere asked whether Mr. Cranmer was prepared to move for the destruction of all fables and of all fairy-stories, and whether all

imagination was to be employed in inventing lies about matters of business?

Before recounting any more of the conversation, I must describe the spot where it took place. At the bottom of the hill there is a little rivulet which, even in the driest summer, forms a reedy, rushy sort of place, through which meanders a little stream three or four feet in width, and about nine inches in depth. Mr. Milverton delights in this spot, though it is said to be rather malarious. On one side of the rivulet there is a high grassy bank, having upon it a very comfortable seat. I will now continue my account of the conversation.

*Milverton.* I cannot agree with you, Cranmer, about the irreverence you assign to these fancies. If we are never to fancy that we might here, or hereafter, be endowed with other gifts than those which we now possess, we must close our eyes completely to all the forms of life which surround us, and which are so suggestive.

I have been very fortunate in life as regards friends and acquaintances. I have known poets, historians, philosophers——

*Ellesmere.* Observe where the fellow puts historians, because he happens to dote upon history.

*Milverton.* —poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen, men of science, artists, doctors, lawyers, and merchants, but I was never fortunate enough to know any man who had made the insect world his study. I am sure I do not know what is the proper name for such a man—I suppose

an entomologist. Well, I was never fortunate enough to know an entomologist.

If we had such a man with us now, what interesting things he could tell us about the myriads of inhabitants of this rushy streamlet. I believe there are creatures below us there, which can both crawl and hop, and fly and swim; which possess eyes by the score; can weave and spin, and build nests, in water; which, in short, embody all the vagaries of the most fanciful person; and about which, by the way, if they were familiar to us, fables and stories might be written having much more pith and diversity in them than those about dogs, bears, wolves, elephants, and foxes, which, after all, are poor simple creatures like ourselves, being seldom able to do more than one thing very well.

*Ellesmere.* I do not think much of your entomologist. I do not want him here at all. He would merely shy barbarous words, half-Latin, half-Greek, at us, and bother us about "genus" and "species," and other things, for which we should not really care one solitary dump.

Besides, we should have to hear all about his grand discovery of the *onomatoscylax*, some pestilent little creature that hops, and runs, and bites, and wriggles, and turns up its tail spitefully at you. No; give me the man who can talk well about anything if you only give him a rough bit of a brief to talk upon. Just read to me, or any other lawyer, a little chapter in any book about insects, and we will argue their case in a manner that will bring round any jury to think whatever we are instructed to make them think on behalf of our clients. There are creatures, are there not, who pop out of their shells to take the air, and then other creatures pop into the vacant shells; and when

the softies come back, they find their houses occupied, and the doors bolted against them. What a good case for an action of ejectment!

*Milverton.* Mark you, I do not mean to say that I have not known men such as Carlyle, Kingsley, and Emerson, who have been able to talk admirably about all forms of nature, from the highest to the lowest. As I think I have told you before, I never heard a more exquisite conversation than one in which Carlyle and Emerson, both of them nice and patient observers of all natural objects, discoursed upon the merits and beauties of common grass. A walk, too, in the country with Kingsley is something to remember; but still I say, as I said before, I should like to know a real entomologist, a man who had lived a great deal with insects——

*Ellesmere.* The Patronage-secretary of the Treasury!

*Milverton.* —and who could tell me all about the *onomatopylex*, which Ellesmere——

*Ellesmere.* No, no; if you are scientific, be accurate—*onomatoscylox*.

*Milverton.* —which Ellesmere affects to scorn, but which I have no doubt, if well studied, would afford the human race many a good lesson in the arts of life. Very probably he is a great architect. The arch was constructed by insects long before it was known to man.

*Mauleverer.* Talking of men who have studied these minor creatures, there is Mr. G. H. Lewes. You know him, Milverton?

*Milverton.* Yes; but he is too gelatinous. He describes admirably; is as clear as the sky at Avignon; but his talk is of molluscs, sea-anemones, jelly-fish, and other flabby, pulpy creatures, squeezable as Ministers of State. I want

a man who has lived with well-developed, shrewd, masterful, designing insects.

*Sir Arthur.* I do not say we wander from the subject, because the fact of these insects possessing multifarious powers is very suggestive. But I want to know why it is irreverent to imagine men to be endowed with other powers or means than those they now possess. I feel rather guilty in this matter, if there is any guilt, as I was the first to tell you a story of the kind which Mr. Cranmer must disapprove of. I mean my "sleep" story. I intended that to convey some sound doctrine.

*Ellesmere.* Yes ; that pleasant tale was nearly suffocated by morality. It was far too moral to be interesting. And observe this, Cranmer, that in almost every story in which extraordinary powers are given to a man, that poor man is sure to come to grief.

Even in that dear "Arabian Nights," the unfortunate "gins," or genii, always get the worst of it, being bottled up for a thousand years, or otherwise maltreated. We make a point of pouring misfortunes with a liberal hand upon the head of any creature whom we admit for a moment, even in fancy, to be a more gifted being than man.

*Milverton.* Well, I have a fanciful idea which, indeed, has been in my mind for many years, and which I fear Cranmer would blame, for if realized it would give a great and, as I think, a most delightful increase to human power.

*Ellesmere.* Let us guess. The philosopher's stone? The power of always reasoning rightly? Long life? A knocker that would knock down all disagreeable people who came to visit you—the postman and telegraph-boy included? A power of eating three dinners a day? A

self-upholding umbrella? A supernatural knowledge of trains, so that you could defy Bradshaw and all his books? A perfectly well-built house, built after a model of some insect establishment? A winged paper-cutter that would always fly to you when you whistled for it?

No; I have it! It is never to be sea-sick!

*Milverton.* No; you have not. You certainly have imagined sundry very delightful appurtenances, such as your discriminating knocker, self-upholding umbrella, and flying paper-cutter.

*Sir Arthur.* Is it the power of seeing clearly into other men's minds?

*Milverton.* No; you will never guess it.

*Ellesmere.* Tell us, then.

*Milverton.* I shall have some difficulty in explaining. I mean that there should be a double soul, taking the word "soul" to include all powers, both of thought and feeling, so that you should be able to give one of these souls perfect rest. They should be so intimately in unison, that what one thinks, or feels, or says, or does, should be admitted to be thought, and felt, and said, and done by the other which is absent. There must be no separate interest, no possibility of reproach. There should be a spare body, so that the one soul could go and recreate itself while the other was fighting the direst battle.

*Lady Ellesmere.* There must be a woman equally gifted to correspond with this man. Conceive a double Sir John! when *one* is enough to drive a poor woman distracted.

*Ellesmere.* As the soundest theologians and metaphysicians have proved conclusively that women have no souls, it will be doing a very handsome thing if we give *them* one. But this new possession would embarrass them very much.

They would lose all that power of governing, so dear to them. Unreason always governs. *Nothing prevents your having your own way so much as being at all amenable to reason.*

*Lady Ellesmere.* Women have just that small portion of irrationality, and only that, which enables them to understand the immense irrationality of men, and so to steer clear of it, or to guide it.

*Sir Arthur.* Well said, Lady Ellesmere! He does not gain much by attacking women in your presence.

*Milverton.* But think of the advantages of my fancy, if it were realized:—all the regrets, and vexations, and remorse being partaken by another soul which would occasionally come fresh to the work, and bear the burden which its exhausted compeer and partner was almost fainting under. Such a man, so gifted, would rule the world. Observe the lives of all great men, who *will* go on working at a moment when the powers are enfeebled. Imagine Napoleon the First with two such souls. Send one of them to vegetate in the country, while the other is conducting the retreat from Moscow, and you would find that the total Napoleon would never have been sent to Elba. Mark you, the two, when combined, are not to have double power.

*Mauleverer.* I am delighted with Milverton's idea of a double soul. It proves to me that he sees that the single soul cannot possibly bear up against its misfortunes.

*Milverton.* No, Mauleverer, you press my words too far. It is but an occasional, and even rare, relief that I imagine is so much wanted for the soul. Have you not known occasions in which you have said to yourself, "I would give anything to have another *me*—to take up the burden for this day only—to attend this funeral—to meet those

men upon that painful business in which my feelings are so likely to overcome my judgment—to fight that battle which I could fight so well, if the gaiety of heart which is requisite were not altogether wanting, while I could, as it were, retire into private life, and collect my thoughts, my energies, and my hopefulness, which, at this critical moment, have deserted me?”

*Sir Arthur.* Really, Mauleverer, I agree with Milverton that you have pressed him too hard. It might not be more than twenty times in one's life that one should want to be absent in the spirit though present in the body; and when one should be so glad to have another soul, a second self, to represent one fully.

I wonder, by the way, whether any of you feel with me that you would like to have been in a different sphere of life.

*Ellesmere.* The life of a sweeper at a crossing used to be my ideal. But I have changed my mind. I should like to have been a waiter at an inn. “Coming, coming, coming.” One would thus see a good deal of life without much trouble. I should observe the different tastes of our customers: how this old gentleman likes to have his mutton-chops well done; how that customer rejoices in baked potatoes; and how the other is offended, if, when he calls for a newspaper, one does not give him the paper which is *his* paper.

I would be very kind, too, to the young people, who are always a little afraid of waiters.

I would be unmarried, because my ideal would be to be free from all responsibility.

Gradually I should have amassed a large sum in savings—say two hundred and seventy pounds—and then my plan



would be to retire, with my sister, a housekeeper in a good family, to our native village of Mudby Parva, which, by the way, would be intolerable to us from the alterations that had been made in it, and from the railway that would pass through it.

But, in reality, we should never realize our great plan of retirement, and I should die in harness, or rather in white tie and seedy black dress-coat.

*Mauleverer.* Think of Ellesmere as a waiter, with no power of interrupting the conversation of the customers! How little men know of themselves! What a miserable mortal he would be!

*Sir Arthur.* And what would you have been, Mauleverer?

*Ellesmere.* Let me answer for him, for I know. He would like to have been the *chef* in a great kitchen—at some club, for instance—where he could have wandered amidst groves of beef-steaks, and forests of mutton-cutlets, followed by a legion of cooks, giving them orders fraught with culinary wisdom.

*Sir Arthur.* And you, Cranmer?

*Cranmer.* I should like to have been a mail-coachman in the olden times.

*Ellesmere.* Of course he would choose something official. How punctual he would have been! How fussy and important about His Majesty's Mails! He would have insisted upon being guard and coachman too.

*Sir Arthur.* And you, Milverton?

*Milverton.* Well, I am not so humble as the rest of you. I should like to have been a colonist—to have conducted a body of settlers to Paraguay. That part of the earth, from what I have heard of it, and read about it, takes my fancy more than any other. Almost every known

product is to be found there.<sup>1</sup> Then there are great rivers, and vast parks reminding one of English scenery ; and withal, a charming climate. Moreover, one would get free, I think, both from European and North American disturbances. Insects, I believe, are not intolerable there. Volcanoes are unknown ; and, in fact, it seems to me that it fulfils the idea of an earthly paradise.

Then I think I should like the business of managing a settlement. I should not take out any lawyers with me—only a notary or two. I should try and get a good many

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Milverton afterwards read to us this extract from some historical work :—

“The most important products of the world can be grown there—sugar, maize, tobacco, cotton ; and it has peculiar products of its own, such as the Paraguay tea. It is not volcanic, and has not to dread the catastrophes which have often overwhelmed the Spanish cities on the other side of the Andes . . . .

“It has lakes, rivers, and woods, and, in the character of its scenery, much resembles an English park. It is rich in trees of every description—cedars, palms, balsams, aloes, cocoa-trees, walnut-trees, spice-trees, almonds, the cotton-plant, the quinaquina that produces the Jesuit’s bark, and another tree, of which the inner bark is so delicate and white, that it can be used as writing-paper. There is also the ceyba tree, which yields a soft woolly substance of which the natives make their pillows.

“The fruits of this most fertile land are oranges, citrons, lemons, the American pear, the apple, peaches, plums, figs, and olives. The bees find here their special home. The woods are not like the silent forests of North America, but swarm with all kinds of birds, having every variety of note and feather, from the soft colours of the wild dove to the gay plumage of the parrot ; from the plaintive note of the nightingale, to the dignified noise of those birds which are said to imitate the trumpet and the organ. A few Indians, rarely to be seen, and appearing like specks in the landscape, roam over this vast plain, which a modern traveller has well said might be ‘the cradle of a mighty nation.’”

young doctors, and a few very carefully selected clergymen. Carpenters, sailors, and navvies should form the bulk of the common people I would bring with me.

*Mauleverer.* Should you take out a newspaper editor? Because I should rather think that would interfere with the paradise.

*Milverton.* No: I should be my own editor, so that I could represent my own quarrels (for quarrels there would be) in my own paper, the only one in the colony, in my own way.

*Sir Arthur.* Would you have an architect, Milverton?

*Milverton.* Yes: I should not object to having one. We should overpower him, and compel him to make plans to please us, and not according to his own preconceived notions.

*Ellesmere.* Should you take out any women?

*Milverton.* Yes: thirty cooks, who would, of course, marry off like wildfire. The rest of the men must marry the women of the country, so as to secure alliances.

*Lady Ellesmere.* And what would you have been, Sir Arthur?

*Sir Arthur.* A painter.

*Ellesmere.* House?

*Sir Arthur.* No: history. You see there is such a happy mixture of manual and mental work in a painter's career. I learnt that long ago from one of Hazlitt's essays. And then, too, what a pleasure to see the work grow under your hand! A book is a thing much further from you than a picture. I look with peculiar tenderness upon a picture, the work of any great painter. I think how it has lived with him—with what fond and anxious looks he has regarded it in early morning and late evening—what joy and

sorrow have gone into it—what great men, his friends, have come to look at it.

Suppose it to be a Titian : Charles V. has come to look at his friend's work ; and has given anxious, judicious, and affectionate criticism about it. Then, too, the painter's loving wife and daughters have given, from day to day, their criticisms, being most careful to give at the same time due encouragement and admiration. In fact, the thing which we see now, has been, for the time, a sort of domestic idol.

Yes, I should like to have been a painter, even if I had been one of only moderate endowments.

*Ellesmere.* Sentiment, sentiment, sentiment ! Think, on the other hand, what you would have suffered from art critics.

*Mauleverer.* It is idle talking of what we should like to have been. There may be some wisdom to be gained from contrasting different situations in life—comparing what one is oneself with what another person is, and so deriving wisdom from the contemplation of the contrast. But I rather agree with Cranmer, that these imaginations lead to nothing.

*Ellesmere.* I don't agree with Cranmer ; but I do see, with Mauleverer, that it may be a wise thing to consider what good qualities are developed in positions in life different from our own, and adopting them into our own.

Milverton *once* said a shrewd thing. Years ago, he remarked to me, that a man generally fulfilled best that position in life for which he was apparently most unfitted by nature. He illustrated it by numberless instances. He said that Lord Althorp was a most successful minister, and *primâ facie* he had none of the qualities for a minister.

Milverton added, I remember, that the best clergymen were those who had some qualities that were somewhat unclerical. I quite agree with him.

You see, old fellow, if you ever do say a good thing, I make a point of remembering it.

*Sir Arthur.* Talking of contrasts of situation, I will tell you the most remarkable instance that ever occurred to me.

I went to see one of the most notable personages in Europe, not on any political errand, but merely as a private friend. Now I shall veil what I am going to tell you as thoroughly as possible, for it is wrong to betray a friend's moods to any stranger. You will conjecture; and your conjectures will most probably be utterly wrong. Well, when I entered his cabinet, I saw at a glance that he was sunk in the deepest dejection. He gave me a short sad smile, shook hands cordially; but seemed to have nothing to say. At length, however, I persuaded him to tell me what ailed his mind. He was misunderstood, he said; his policy was misrepresented everywhere: he was weary of the never-ending labour and struggle. "See the hideous calumnies that are current about me!" he exclaimed. "What is life worth? What a dreary farce it all is!"

*Ellesmere.* Well, and what friendly stings, my dear fellow, did you add?

*Sir Arthur.* I took an uncommon, but, as I think, a judicious course.

I did not say one word in contradiction to his statements. How could I? They were true. I did not urge, that if he had met with great failures, he had enjoyed great successes. I did not attempt to soothe him by showing what a potent personage he was.

I Mauleverized, if I may coin a word, to explain shortly what I did.

I simply dwelt upon the huge amount of misery and disappointment in the world. To illustrate this, I fell into a strain of quotation. The personage I addressed knew many languages.

I reminded him of the saying of Petrarch: "*Initium cæcitas: progressio labor: error omnia.*"

I quoted your favourite bit, Milverton, from Disraeli: "Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

That made me think of Sir George Lewis's "Life would be very tolerable but for its pleasures."

The great man smiled at that, which encouraged me to give a slightly different version of my own—namely: "Life would be intolerable but for its absurdities." He was pleased to smile at that, too.

Then I quoted from Pascal—I forget what. Then from Rousseau.

Then I ventured humbly to say that I thought that some of the greatest men in the world had been the great writers; and that it was found, as in the case of David and Solomon, that when they were monarchs as well as writers, their writings did not the less betray their misery.

I showed him that Horace, notwithstanding his Chloes, and Lesbias, and myrtle coronets, and Chian wine, was a melancholy individual:

"Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,  
Labuntur anni," &c.

—also Pope, Swift, Byron, Shelley, Cowper, and the rest of them. I gave him Tennyson's

“Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean.  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes  
In looking at the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.”

Of course, I brought in my Browning bit about the greatness of the mind being shown by the shadow which it casts.

I need hardly say I touched upon Cervantes and Shakespeare,

“ But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here  
About my heart : but it is no matter.”

And again :

“'Tis but a tale,  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.”

Then thinking I had not treated him with any Italian, I gave him this passage from Leopardi : “ *Ma io, quanto a me, con licenza vostra e del secolo, sono infelicissimo ; e tale mi credo ; e tutti i giornali del due mondi non mi persuaderanno il contrario.*” The latter bit about the newspapers amused him greatly.

I longed to give him De Quincey's magnificent passage about “Our Lady of Sorrow,” but I could not recollect it.

Finally, I wound up with Sir William Temple, “When all is done human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.”

I think my conversation had, as was natural, a cheering effect for the time. He thanked me very much : something that would have been tears in any other man rose over his expressive countenance, and I withdrew. As I did so,

however, I am afraid I noticed in a parting glance at him, as he sank back in his chair, that his melancholy was not so easily to be baffled, but that it only waited for my departure to seize upon him again.

*Ellesmere.* Well, but the contrast? I suppose you saw a happy beggar at the gate, munching an unexpected crust, or revelling in an unaccustomed sausage.

*Sir Arthur.* No; it was not so common-place as that. I went away by train. In the carriage were a young man and his wife, not a newly-married couple. They were the very types of round, smiling, smooth-faced insignificance. But how they did enjoy their excursion! They sucked the same orange: they bit at the same cake. Though they evidently were never parted, they had an unceasing flow of utter babblement to interchange. They put me so much in mind of two monkeys! Their talk, though exquisitely silly, was irradiated—really made beautiful—by happiness. They minded me no more than if I had been a bit of the wood-work of the carriage. No reticence had they in their joy, and in their supreme satisfaction with each other.

When I contemplated them, and when I thought of the great man I had left sunk in gloom and dejection, I felt that happiness was not equally distributed to all, as people sometimes perversely contend. By the way they spoke of the great personage, and very kindly too, which won my heart; but as being one who had an infinity of oranges and cakes, and who had no need to save up for three months, in order to afford such a delightful outing as theirs was to be.

*Ellesmere.* It would have been very wicked; but I should like to have heard what they would have said if you had Mauleverized them.



*Sir Arthur.* I would not have done ſo for the world ; I declare I would rather have ſtolen their money, and ſpoiled their excursion in that way.

*Ellesmere.* But to return to the main ſubject. Do keep to the point, my excuſive friends.

I could make the greateſt poſſible improvement as regards your wiſh for a ſecond ſoul, Milverton. You want that ſoul to be exactly like your own. I would have it the complement to your own. Where you are ſoft, it ſhould be hard ; where you are ſympathetic, it ſhould be cold ; where you are ſimple and ſtupid, it ſhould be aſtute and alert ; and then indeed it would be of ſome good to you. In fact, you ought to have mine as a ſecond ſoul to yours ; and we ſhould fight the battle of life triumphantly. I think I hear the Milvertonian ſoul ſaying to the Ellesmerian, "You muſt fight theſe fellows to-morrow, for I really cannot ;" and the Ellesmerian ſoul would rejoice in the conteſt. Perhaps the day afterwards ſome judicious man would remark, "What a much cleverer fellow Milverton is than I thought ; you ſee we could not take him in at all, he was down upon us in a moment : and ſo good-humoured, too, whereas I always thought he was an irritable, over-ſenſitive perſon. No fuſſy particularity either ; not at all the fellow to be for ever waſhing his own ſoap."

One thing, however, you would have to do, Maſter Milverton : you would have to manage Lady Ellesmere for me ; and I have no doubt ſhe would ſay, not knowing of the interchange of ſouls, "How manageable John is to-day ! not quite ſo bright as uſual, but how much more my ſlave ; and he ſeems to think exactly what I think," for you would have the art, of which I have none, to perſuade her that your thoughts were hers, and that when

you were acting most completely on your own hook, as the saying is, you were but using her bait. Oh dear, what a surprise it would be to her when the real Ellesmere came back to undertake the management of my lady!

*Sir Arthur.* I think I have heard something like your idea before, Milverton, in some French story.

*Milverton.* No, Sir Arthur, you have not, I assure you. I know what you are thinking of—one of Eugène Sue's novels. In that, an artisan enters into the body of a marquis, and has to go through some very uncomfortable scenes. But the marquis is totally unconscious of the change; and the artisan is not aware, while he is a marquis, that he has another form of existence. It is only when he comes to himself again that he knows that he has had for twenty-four hours the experience of a marquis's life. Eugène Sue's object was, doubtless, to show the poor man how great a mistake it often is to envy the rich man. There was no increase of power given to the individual soul.

Now, I really do not see, taking into consideration the infinite variety and beneficence manifested in creation, why in some happy planet there may not be a great increase of power given to a creature something like man.

*Ellesmere.* I am not so taken as the rest of you with Milverton's fond imaginations. I see fifty objections to his grand idea. If the other soul is to be of any real use or comfort, it must have individuality. If it has individuality, it will differ in opinion with Soul No. 1.

Again, you may talk about joys being doubled, and sorrows being halved; but I do not take much interest in things that are done in committee. The whole affair is too much of a joint-stock transaction.

*Milverton.* I am going to tell you something, which

perhaps has some application to Ellesmere, and to the critical race generally—a little simple story which I have often longed to tell when Ellesmere has been taking points, and making endless small objections.

*Ellesmere.* Oh, we are a little nettled now, are we? Nothing makes a man more cross than when a really kind friend shows him that his poetry won't scan. The same thing when it is shown him that what he thinks to be his most poetical ideas are all awry, as it were, and won't bear looking at. Pray tell your story, though.

[“Oh, yes, pray do,” said the others.]

*Ellesmere.* How delighted you all are at any attack being made upon me! Everybody seems to rouse up all of a sudden; and Fairy perceiving a general movement, makes a circuit round us, as you see, and sniffs and snuffs as if there were a rat or a badger near, to be hunted or baited. Tell your story; do not spare my feelings. I like to see people happy. This sort of thing amuses you, and it does not hurt me.

*Milverton.* When there is a nursery in a house, everybody must admit that the pleasantest meal in the day is nursery tea. I always contrive to become sufficiently familiar with the nursery authorities to be admitted. The mistress is never more agreeable than when presiding at this tea. The master gets away if he can from his sporting friends and their eternal talk about horses, dogs, and partridges; and enjoys the high paternal pleasure of playing at pick-a-back with his little boys. The children are much more pleasant and natural at this tea-time than when they are brought down in their best nursery-frocks after dinner.

*Ellesmere.* Ugh : this nursery story, which is to confound all judicious critics, including myself.

*Milverton.* Well, I was assisting at one of these pleasant nursery teas in a country house. One of the children present was a pretty little girl about three years old, who had a nurse, especially devoted to her, of the name of Maria.

By the way, I may mention that some baked apples had made their appearance at this nursery tea, which in consequence may be considered to have been what the fashionable world calls "a high tea."

Suddenly, at a pause in the conversation, the little child, putting down a piece of bread and butter, exclaimed, with a very distinct utterance, "*Ma-i-vey say 'happles'; fool she are.*"

Maria, a jolly country girl about fifteen years old, blushed, but looked quite pleased that Miss Gertrude was so clever, and said, "You dear little thing."

The mamma was "shocked" at such a "naughty word" as "fool" being used to "good kind Maria."

Miss Gertrude having uttered her "judicious" criticism, was not much dismayed by mamma's remonstrance.

I thought of Ellesmere and of his flock of critics whom he delights in.

You see the small critic pointed out, with great satisfaction, a little over-indulgence in the use of the aspirate on the part of poor Maria; but was perfectly unconscious that in her own six words she had committed four errors.

*Ellesmere.* How do you make out four?

*Milverton.* "Maivey" for "Maria," "say" for "says," "are" for "is;" and surely you would admit that the use

of the word "fool" is thoroughly inappropriate. People who misplace their aspirates are not necessarily fools.

But does not Miss Gertrude's criticism remind you all, not only of Ellesmere's way of exercising his critical faculty, but also of other criticisms not heard in nurseries, but in the high courts of literature and politics? Have you never found the critic disclose four errors on his own part for one that he delights to point out in the sayings or doings of the person he criticises? You may be sure that something very nearly akin to "Ma-i-vey say 'happles'; fool she are," has been uttered in very high places this very day, and not by children of three years old only.

*Ellesmere.* Absolutely malignant! He has bottled up this story to be told against me on some great occasion. I believe it has been impending over my devoted head for the last two years. I really was not particularly critical to-day; but he was particularly vexed, as people always are when the ideas which they are very fond of, but which are not a little rickety, come to be examined by the drill-sergeant, or rather by the Medical Board.

*Sir Arthur.* It is an excellent story.

*Lady Ellesmere.* I shall never forget it.

*Ellesmere.* I know that; I shall be bored by my lady with the story all my life. And as for Sir Arthur, he was sure to delight in it. He has undergone a little criticism himself in the course of his life—totally unjust, no doubt; for as I heard him say to Milverton the other day, "Criticism is for the most part so thin." What he meant I do not know, but the two authors chuckled over the phrase, and seemed to think it so condemnatory and so clever.

*Sir Arthur.* Milverton has silenced Ellesmere. I am, however, going to revive Sir John, and I shall do so by

returning to our original subject. Have you never felt over-wearied yourself, Ellesmere, and as if you would give anything to have another Sir John to take up the work for you? In no great case that you have had to argue?

*Ellesmere.* I am a sensible man; and I do not allow myself to fret myself to fiddle-strings. Sometimes, after a weighty consultation, I have found myself lying awake, and scheming and planning how to conduct a case. On such occasions I do everything I can to break up such trains of thought. I say to myself, "My health and spirits belong to my clients; there is nothing so important for their interests as that I should be strong and in good nerve to-morrow."

Only think if race-horses, the night before the Derby, knew about to-morrow's race, how the more nervous and sensitive spirits among them would fret, and fuss, and lose their sleep, and fail to answer, when called upon to make their final effort.

When I was in the —— case, one of the heaviest I was ever engaged in, I found myself at this planning of my course of argument the night before, and becoming cold, and nervous, and miserable. I got up, and lit a fire, and set to work to read a volume of Victor Hugo's novel, "*Les Misérables*." That great book has, happily, certain long parenthetical discussions which are not very exciting. I fell upon one of these, and in half an hour I was in a sweet and composed state of mind, and I had five hours' good sleep that night.

My client was a dear friend as well as client, and when I saw his anxious face next day in court, I should not like to have told him that I had read "*Les Misérables*" the previous night, in order to get rid of him and his cause

from my thoughts. But it was the best thing I could have done for him.

You see, therefore, that you do not take much by appealing to me to back up Milverton's "fond imaginations," for so I must call them.

*Milverton.* My dear Sir Arthur, you cannot bring Ellesmere round, when he has once taken up a side against you. Let us change the subject. Ellesmere's reference to "*Les Miserables*" has put me in mind of what he said some time ago about novels. Do you remember the fun he made of his "Edwin and Angelina"? But if he meant to run down the works of fiction of the present day, I am sure he is not warranted in doing so. I have just been reading a number of the "Last Chronicle of Barset." What an excellent novel it is! How true to life are the conversations and the letters! Now I maintain that no age has been so rich in good works of fiction, and perhaps in good writing of all kinds, as ours. Ellesmere will, I dare say, declare that, in a future age, almost all the present writers will be quite forgotten. I do not know, but I cannot imagine that Tennyson and Browning, Dickens and Bulwer, and Thackeray and Trollope, and the great feminine writers, the authoress of "The Mill on the Floss," the authoress of "Jane Eyre," or of "John Halifax, Gentleman," and many others, will cease to be valued and their works to be read.

I think the same may be said of the great historical writers—such as Hallam, Grote, Macaulay, Carlyle, Milman, Froude, and Merivale.

I don't venture to speak much about the writers of other nations, but I think it will be a long time before Emerson, and Hawthorne, and Prescott will be forgotten in their own country.

Now I have not brought this subject on the *tapis* merely for the sake of getting a change of subject, but I have something very important to say about it. I see, though, Ellesmere is impatient to have his say.

*Ellesmere.* "Blow the trumpets, sound the drums!" Milverton is going to say something at some future time which will be worth hearing.

You began by talking about the "Last Chronicle of Barset." I am sorry to say that I fear that my relations with the distinguished author of that work will be considerably changed for the worse. I cannot be friendly with him any more, if Lily Dale——. No, I shan't tell you what I was going to say: you would only laugh at me.

*Milverton.* How men may misunderstand one another! I really do believe that, if Ellesmere were to meet Mr. Trollope, he would be very cold or cross to him if Lily Dale marries John Eames, or if she marries Crosby, or if she does not marry him, or if she does not become an old maid, for I am sure I do not know what Ellesmere wants her to do.

Trollope would go away thinking that he had somehow or other offended Ellesmere, or was greatly disesteemed by him; whereas Ellesmere would be paying him the highest compliment that could be paid to a man of imagination.

Here is this severe, satirical, case-hardened lawyer, and he is so possessed by a phantom of the novelist's brain, that he is positively prepared to be enraged if this she-phantom does not act exactly as he would have her. What's Lily Dale to him, or he to Lily Dale?

*Ellesmere.* Well, she is more to me than many a character I read of in history. Your historical characters are such fleeting things nowadays. I used to dislike Nero. I



am now told that he was a most estimable gentleman, and has been quite misunderstood until the present time. *If he fiddled at all, it was not during the fire, but after the fire, to collect subscriptions for the sufferers.*

But what was the important thing that you were going to tell us, Milverton ?

*Milverton.* I do not care how much you ridicule me, but I do maintain that ours is an age noted for its richness in literary skill. Look at the excellence in the daily and weekly press, and in these innumerable monthlies. It is a perpetual source of astonishment to me to see how many people can write well, and have really a great deal to tell you.

I know that Ellesmere will say that I am always unreasonably prone to dwell upon the merits of everything and everybody ; but, upon the other hand, I think I am very critical about the writing of English.

A few minutes ago, I mentioned several names of men eminent in literature. But I could add many others. There are Henry Taylor, and Ruskin, and Kingsley, and John Mill, for instance : I pity the man who has read their works, and has not been able to learn a great deal from them, and to appreciate the goodness of the writing.

Amongst our statesmen, too, there are men who would have been very considerable writers, if they had not devoted themselves to statesmanship. Lord Russell's "Europe since the Peace of Utrecht" is a very well written work. Mr. Disraeli's novels are remarkable productions. I read his "Contarini Fleming," as a youth, with immense admiration ; and I read it again, last year, with great pleasure. Mr. Gladstone, also, and the Duke of Argyll, are men who have shown that they can leave their mark in literature.

Whatever you may say, I do maintain that ours is a great age as regards power of thought and expression.

Now, what I want you to notice is, that the great men who have made the age pre-eminent were all born, or at least nurtured, and the direction of their talents given to them, in a time of profound peace. The great strides in European civilization, whether in arts, in science, or in literature, have been made in consequence of there having been such periods. I wish we could have Buckle back again in life here with us, for I am sure he would——

[At this moment the postman made his appearance with the second delivery of letters, which the old man asked us to receive, in order that he might be saved the trouble of going up the hill. Now Sir John is furious about this second delivery. It is no joke with him; he is really very angry.]

*Ellesmere.* Have you no conscience, George; are you dead to all the finer feelings of humanity, that you molest us twice a day? I must come to some understanding with you. Your proper Christmas-box from me is two hundred and forty pence,—that is, if you do not bring me any letters during the time that I am here. For every letter you bring I must deduct a penny, and if the balance turns against you, you must give me a Christmas-box. I do believe you have brought me two hundred and eighty letters this time; consequently you owe me forty pence: which, when I was a National School-boy, used to amount to three shillings and fourpence, the sum, Mr. George, you are now in debt to me.

*George.* Oh, your honour would not be so 'ard on poor old George, as 'ave know'd you these twenty year, and

such a snowy winter, too, as last winter 'ave a been. 'Sides I must do what the missus (the postmistress) tells I to.

*Ellesmere.* It is no excuse, George! If we do all that our "missuses" tell us, we shall most of us come to the gallows.

*George.* Ah, you be allus so jokous, Lawyer Ellesmere; but you know we must. (And saying this, the old man took off his hat, and, making a general bow to us, trotted off.)

*Ellesmere.* Do you see Peter Garbet's house in the distance—that wretched hovel surrounded by other hovels, on the top of Mendmore Hill? I am sorry to tell you that old Peter and two of his children are ill of the fever, and that Mrs. Garbet is nearly distracted.

*Mrs. Milverton.* I knew all about it, John. I have done everything I could for her.

*Ellesmere.* I know you have, my dear Blanche, and so have I in my little way; but how can we counteract the post-office?

*Milverton.* What nonsense, Ellesmere! I am sure old Peter has not received three letters in the course of his life.

*Ellesmere.* Considering that you pretend to have a great admiration for history, you are certainly a very shallow fellow, my dear friend, and never look far back enough to causes.

Who in modern times invented the post-office? As Macaulay would have said, "Every schoolboy knows that."

Why, Louis the Eleventh: just like him, is it not? Everybody who has seen Charles Kean in the character of Louis the Eleventh would know that that crafty, cruel, unprincipled king would, of course, invent the post-office system.

What did he say to himself?—"Despatches make my life

miserable ; my subjects shall have a taste of them, too. Besides, they will not look so sharply into my proceedings, if they have their own letters to molest them every day."

What happens? By these means Louis the Eleventh crushes his nobles, and increases the kingly power to an enormous extent. Louis the Fourteenth, the Regent Orleans, and Louis the Fifteenth abuse this kingly power outrageously. France is rendered miserable ; and in good, well-meaning Louis the Sixteenth's time comes the French Revolution.

Out of the French Revolution, by necessity, comes Napoleon the First.

By an equal necessity, England and Pitt must have a set-to with Napoleon the First.

Hence four hundred millions of debt.

Hence window-tax and excise duty on bricks.

Consequently Peter Garbet's cottage is built with one side against a damp hill to save bricks, and has a window only eighteen inches square. Hence dampness and insufficient ventilation, and hence poor Peter Garbet and his two children lie ill in that miserable hovel.

*Milverton.* I am sorry to say anything against a series of statements and conclusions which are so admirably set forth by our learned friend ; but Louis the Eleventh did not establish the post-office in the sense which Ellesmere understands it. He established a series of posts for the Government and for the Court, but it was not adopted by the community in general till Richelieu's time.

*Ellesmere.* The same thing. Richelieu was but Louis the Eleventh in cardinal's petticoats.

*Milverton.* I am sorry to intrude with unpleasant facts,

but Richelieu was not the prime agent in this matter. It was done by the Duc d'Epemon, when Richelieu was for a year or two in retirement.

*Ellesmere.* What wretched pedantry all this is! It is clear that the cruel Louis the Eleventh was the inventor of the system. You admit that he applied it to his Court. The Court in those days comprehended the principal men in the kingdom. Well, then, this system was enlarged in Richelieu's time. Do you think it was done without his approbation, or continued without his consent?

Practically speaking, it is a device of tyranny. After you have passed the immature age of twenty-three, does anybody write to you but to annoy you about something?

*Mauleverer.* I think Ellesmere is quite right. All the clever inventions of man only lead to increased misery.

*Milverton.* What do you say to the use of chloroform?

*Ellesmere.* They do not apply it to the right people. Anybody who is about to write a letter to a lawyer in vacation should be chloroformed, and the trance should be made to last for two years at least.

Here Sir John, who had an immense number of letters to-day, got up and walked away. The rest of us did the same, and so the conversation ended.

We had only just begun our walk, when we heard Sir John calling after us. When he came within speaking distance, he shouted out to us, "Mind, I don't agree with Milverton about his eminent men being born and nurtured in times of peace. I am

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prepared to maintain the exact contrary, only I haven't time just now. Old George, the villain, came at the exact moment to save Milverton, that peace-maniac, from a sound intellectual drubbing. Good-bye." And so saying, he rushed up the hill again, while we proceeded on our walk towards the town; Mr. Milverton merely remarking, "What a contentious creature it is!" But I never thought he would let that pass.

## CHAPTER X,

NEXT morning I awoke at seven o'clock, and saw a tall figure very busy at my drawers. "Who is that?" I exclaimed.

"It's me," replied a voice which I recognised as Sir John Ellesmere's.

*Ellesmere.* I say "It's me" advisedly; and am prepared to maintain that it is good grammar to say so.

What am I about? Why, I am rectifying my frontiers in the article of cricket-balls. Little Tommy Jessom has got a whole holiday, and has honoured us by a visit. A quarter to seven is not a strictly fashionable hour for making a morning call upon a respectable family; but boys are privileged beings. The minute but persevering Tommy insists upon our having a game at cricket, and I am going to give him an innings. I saw you put away a well-greased ball in one of these drawers the other day.

Hallo! emerald studs! and very pretty ones too. What young woman has been foolish enough to see anything in your lengthy face, Sandy, and to give you these studs? I see I must "execute the provisions of a treaty" in regard to

these studs—a treaty to be signed by the small Tommy and me, which being rightly interpreted, will be found to provide that, under pain of being thrashed himself, he shall come into your room, carry off the studs, and present them to the other high contracting party. You shall then complain to me of Tommy ; and between us we will execute the provisions of another treaty, and carry off Master Tommy's bat and stumps. We want stumps sadly, and should not be the worse for a spare bat. Thus everything will be arranged satisfactorily, according to the latest and best construction put upon international law.

So saying, Sir John, having, to use his own phrase, “rectified his frontiers” by seizing upon my pet cricket-ball, strode out of the room to play with Tommy Jessom.

An hour or two after breakfast we all went to the summer-house to have another reading of Realmah.

*Ellesmere.* Tommy, I have a serious word to say to you. You are an incomplete, imperfect boy ; in fact, a mere eidolon, or spectrum, or larva, of a boy. The perfect boy has always in his pockets a ball of string, a lump of beeswax, thirty-seven marbles, two alley-taws, and a knife with six blades, a gimlet, a punch, a corkscrew, and a little saw. I regret to say that you were found to be deficient in all these articles this morning. Proceed at once to Mother Childman's in the town, and buy them forthwith. (Here Ellesmere gave the boy some money.) Away! Avaunt! “*Quousque tandem abutère, Caiilina, patientiâ nostrâ!*” Vanish.

[*Exit Little Tommy.*]

The boy would be bored to death by our reading and



our talk. By the way, he has made me very unhappy this morning.

*Milverton.* Why, he is the best of little boys—a perfect boy, notwithstanding the absence of beeswax and string.

*Ellesmere.* I am in a sort of a way his godfather. Poor S——, my cousin, was his godfather; and now that S—— is dead, I consider that I take his place. Consequently, I thought it my duty, in the intervals of cricket, to talk to him a little about his lessons. It is the same sad story as it was in our time. Hexas and pens for to-day: alcaics and Latin theme for Monday; in fact, a painful and laborious gathering together of useless rubbish.

*Johnson.* What are hexas and pens, Sir John?

*Ellesmere.* You have not been brought up, Sandy, in the groves of Academus, or you would know that hexas and pens are the short for hexameters and pentameters.

Hereupon ensued a conversation of the most animated description. I could not have thought that any people would have been so excited about the question of boys making Latin verses. The most uncomplimentary speeches passed between Mr. Cranmer and Sir John, Mr. Cranmer insinuating that Sir John would have been a much more polished individual if he had made more Latin verses in his boyhood, and Sir John insinuating that Mr. Cranmer would not have been quite so much given to routine, and so narrow-minded, if he had made fewer Latin verses.

Mr. Milverton—an unusual thing for him—rushed in to aid Sir John; upon which Sir Arthur came

down upon *him*, not in his accustomed dignified way, but with great warmth and vehemence, declaring that, if these new ideas were to prevail, all elegance and scholarship in literature would pass away. Mr. Mauleverer sneered a little at both parties, but rather inclined to Mr. Cranmer's view of the question, from his hatred of anything new. For some time they all talked at once, and I cannot give any account of it.

When the fray had a little subsided, Sir Arthur and Sir John were left in possession of the field. Sir John demanded of Sir Arthur a distinct enumeration of the advantages to be gained in education from the making of Latin and Greek verses. Sir Arthur did not hesitate to accept the challenge, and enumerated these advantages one by one. Sir John pointed out the fallacy in each case, dwelt upon the loss of time, the loss of real knowledge, and the cumbering the mind with what is useless, occasioned by the present system of classical education. I thought he had much the best of the argument, though Sir Arthur was very eloquent and very adroit.

At length the conversation was broken off, as they thought that Tommy Jessom would soon be back upon us again; and Mr. Milverton commenced reading another portion of *Realmah*.

## The Story of Realmah.

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### THE REVOLUTION.

GOVERNMENT is a most mysterious thing. There are constitutions which seem as if they would last for ever, being well-constructed, reasonable things ; but they do not last ;—and there are others full of anomalies, abounding in contradictions, which persevere in living, however unreasonably. Thus it was at Abibah. The least-foreseeing of prophets might have prophesied that, in a nation where the supreme power was divided amongst four chiefs, the government would be sure to be soon broken up. This strange government, however, had lasted for several generations.

A time was now approaching when this government would be sorely tried. The scarcity of provisions made men sour, and ready to blame their chiefs with or without reason. The immediate cause of danger, however, arose from a most trivial circumstance. There was a day of festival in honour of Salera, the goddess of the waters. At this festival it had been customary for the inhabitants of the town to appear in festal dresses totally different from their ordinary costume, but both as to form and

colour each individual might follow his, or her, own fancy. It happened, however, that on one occasion, a few years previously, a large family of children had been dressed out with blue scarves, while those of a neighbouring family had been dressed with red scarves. There was great contest in the particular neighbourhood as to which set of children had been most becomingly adorned. Gradually the dispute spread into other quarters of the city, and eventually the population were divided into those who wore blue scarves at Salera's festival, and those who wore red. Feuds, similar to those of the circus at Constantinople, which shook the thrones of emperors, arose about these colours; and the red and the blue factions hated one another with a fell religious hatred.

The chief of the West had incautiously proclaimed himself an ardent partisan for the Blues, and had earned the intense dislike of the Reds. It happened that he had lately issued some regulations about the distribution of food, which, though very reasonable, had given great offence to his quarter of the city. The Red faction were crafty enough to drop all allusion to their hatred to him as a strong partisan of the Blue faction, and to dwell merely upon that which was a subject of general offence to both factions.

This chief of the West was one of those unfortunate rulers who seem to be born at the wrong time; and whose virtues, no less than their errors and their vices, contribute to their misfortunes. In this dispute

between the Red and Blue factions, though, as I have said above, he was an ardent partisan of the Blue faction, he had never favoured them in the distribution of offices; being too just a man for that. He was therefore neither valued as a friend, nor feared, however much disliked, as an enemy. He was very much the prey of the last speaker, and so his policy was never consistent; being alternately strict and lax, bold and timorous. A simple-minded, good, honest man, having every wish to govern rightly, he could scarcely be said to govern at all. It seems as if such men were sent into the world, and placed in power just at a time of crisis, in order that it might be rendered absolutely certain that the crisis should be developed into great disaster, or at least great change.

Realmah knew the character of this man well, and from that knowledge foreboded calamity.

It was peculiarly unfortunate that the poorer inhabitants of Abibah should have congregated in the Western quarter of the town. It was there that the weavers dwelt, who were always inclined to be a turbulent body; and who were the first to suffer from any scarcity of provisions, as men can dispense with weaving, and go on with their old garments, when threatened by want of food. From the Western quarter the disaffection spread; and great political discussions arose throughout the whole city as to their present form of government. Any person, or thing, much discussed, is sure to be much

vilified; and this quadrilateral government, when once it had to endure discussion, offered many points for attack and depreciation. Moreover, there were not wanting amongst the Sheviri ambitious men anxious for a more republican form of government, and who looked forward to a position of power and profit, if that mode of government should be established. Their scheme was to form a council of twelve, by election, who should have supreme power for five years, three members of this council being allotted to each division of the city.

Disaffection grew to a great height, and a dissolution of the present constitution was imminent.

It is not to be supposed that men like Realmah, belonging to the ruling families, were unobservant of this dangerous state of public opinion. In fact, Realmah was perfectly certain that there would be a revolution, and he began to prepare for it. The main thing that he was afraid of was that, in some popular tumult, a capture of himself, or of any of the principal people on his side, would be effected by his opponents. He was determined to profit by the revolution, but to have no hand whatever in making it. He wished that whatever step he might take, should appear to have been forced upon him. The main terror of his life, as we know, was lest the tribes of the North, already possessing the knowledge of iron, should come down upon his nation, and enslave it before he had completed his manufacture of that metal. He had long come to the conclusion that a despotism would be

preferable to that. The preparations that he made to prevent his being suddenly captured, were these :— In his principal room he secretly contrived that, near the entrance, a part of the flooring should descend into the water upon his cutting a cord. This was for his enemies. For his own escape, he made a trap-door at the further end of the room. Beneath this opening he had a boat suspended. There was room between the lower flooring of some of the better houses in Abibah (and Realmah's was one) and the water, to navigate a boat, pushing it along from one pile to another. By these means he would be able to reach the water-stairs of the residence of his uncle, the chief of the East.

He knew from his spies the very day upon which a general outbreak was intended to be made. Early on that day he took care that the whole of the guard should be assembled in the guard-room attached to the house of the chief of the East. Realmah remained in his own house, resolved to take no active part until some step of violence had been taken by the other side. On some pretext he contrived to remove Talora to the house of his uncle, while he and the Varnah remained at home waiting the event.

The opposite side were well aware of the sagacity of Realmah, and had arranged that a party of their adherents should attack him in his house, and that two of their principal partisans should pay him a visit of courtesy an hour before the attack was to be made, in order that they might be sure of knowing where he

was, and of being able to secure him. Accordingly, in the evening, these two noblemen, Tapu and Paradee, paid their ceremonial visit. The crafty Realmah contrived to place them immediately over that part of the floor which he could make descend into the water. The guests talked upon indifferent subjects, and then afterwards ventured to discuss the dangerous state of political affairs. Realmah went on discoursing platitudes and keeping up the conversation in an easy manner. Soon the noise of a great tumult was heard. The revolution had broken out before the appointed time. Indeed, revolutions are seldom conducted with the needful punctuality. Some of the rioters had made at once for Realmah's house, had broken through the outer doors, and now rushed into the apartment. The two guests then changed their tone, and demanded that Realmah should surrender to them. Having gained what he wanted, namely, this overt act of rebellion, he let the flooring drop beneath them; and, in the confusion that ensued, he and the Varnah escaped in the manner he had planned to the house of his uncle, the chief of the East.

Realmah then hastened to put into operation the plan that he had long determined upon. There were certain officers in the state whose functions cannot be better described than by saying that they were like those of Spanish alguazils. Realmah's scheme was to arrest the principal conspirators by means of these alguazils (whose fidelity he had taken great pains to secure), giving to each one of them a guard of ten



men. Those attendants he had furnished from the tribe of the fishermen and of the ironworkers who were devoted to him.

The conduct of Realmah at this crisis was widely different from that of Athlah; and a philosophic student of history, a kind of person not known in Abibah, might have added to his store one more notable instance of the way in which revolutions are made, and of the kind of characters which guide them.

Athlah, as we know, was not merely a stalwart man of war, but also a very considerable person in council and debate. At any rate, he had always something to say, and people were always willing to hear what he said.

Those chiefs who were loyal to the present system of government, when the tumult had begun, rushed to the house of the chief of the East. An irregular sort of council was held. Realmah briefly explained his long-matured plan. Athlah raised all manner of objections—not that he wished to object, for he was sincerely anxious to find a remedy for the present state of things. But when the time for swift action came, this bold hardy man, an excellent lieutenant in war, could not see his way to a course of action; and his mind was filled with doubts, scruples, and difficulties. “They had no authority,” he said, “to interfere with the other quarters of the town. The West was to govern the West, just as the East governed the East, without interference. The

proceedings suggested by Realmah would be a perfect breach of the constitution. He, for one, could not take such a responsibility upon himself." He did not use such a fine word as responsibility. The equivalent for it in their language was "tying a knot," and Athlah said he could not tie such a knot.

The truth is that Realmah could tie a knot, a feat which the daring Athlah could not accomplish.

Realmah replied, "The counsel that I gave, will not be the counsel that I should give when that water has ceased to pour.<sup>1</sup> It must be taken at once, or rejected for ever. Great Lords, Dividers of Bread, I see that you agree with me; and I hasten to execute your commands." So saying, Realmah quitted the room. The great Lords, Dividers of Bread, were secretly glad that anybody would take upon himself the burden of tying a knot, and save them the agony of deciding what should be done at this dangerous crisis. There were not wanting some of the baser sort who said to themselves that they could hereafter declare that they had not assented to Realmah's counsel, and so they should be safe whatever might happen.

Perhaps Realmah's well-devised plans might altogether have failed but for a piece of singular good fortune. A violent storm of wind and rain came on that evening. Revolutions require, before all things, fine weather. The populace gradually dispersed. In

<sup>1</sup> They measured time by the falling of water from a vessel with a small hole in it, resembling the *klepsydra*.

that part of the town which was subject to the chief of the East, the alguazils and their body-guards succeeded in capturing, by domiciliary visits, the chief conspirators, of whom Realmah had long ago made a careful list.

The other quarters of the town were not so well managed. The chief of the West was slain at the first outbreak; and the chiefs of the North and the South had, in a most dastardly manner, fled. The moment that the capture had been made of the principal conspirators in the Eastern quarter, Realmah felt himself strong enough to pursue the same system in the North and in the South. Before daybreak, three-quarters of the city owned the rule of the chief of the East; that is, practically speaking, of his wise and energetic nephew, Realmah. A sharp encounter took place between the insurgents in the Western quarter and the troops who remained faithful in the other three-quarters of the town, in which contest the insurgents were completely worsted.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### REALMAH BECOMES KING.

THE city was now in peace. Order had been restored; and all the sensible inhabitants of Abibah felt that to Realmah this peace and order were due. No member of the family of the chief of the West had come for-

ward to take his place. The flight of the chiefs of the North and of the South was looked upon as an act of abdication on their part. The councils of these quarters of the town met together, and it was almost unanimously resolved (what was done in one council not being, at the time, known in the others) that the chiefdom of each quarter should be offered to Realmah. His aged uncle, the great chief of the East, upon hearing the determinations of the several councils, said that he would abdicate in favour of his nephew, who should thenceforward be king of the whole nation. It is curious to observe that, from their having a word in their language for king, the kingly form of government must, at some time or other, have prevailed amongst them. There was an ancient proverb to this effect,—“*Lakaree<sup>1</sup> slapped the king's white face—when he was dead.*”

The principal men of the several councils presented themselves before Realmah, and tendered to him this kingly office. He asked for twenty-four hours to deliberate.

The evening after he had received these men was like the one that has been described at the beginning of this story. The atmosphere was cloudless, and the stars were visible. Realmah walked out upon the balcony overlooking the lake, which he had walked upon in the early days of his career, and when his chief thought had been how to defeat the wiles of the ambassador of the Phelatahs. What great events had

<sup>1</sup> A cant name for one of the lowest class of weavers.

happened to him during the interval that had passed ! He had been comparatively an obscure young man when he first walked up and down that balcony, and gazed upon those stars. Since then, he had been in battles ; had performed the part of a conqueror, and endured that of a prisoner. He had been madly in love with the beautiful Talora ; and now, if he told the truth, her charms had very small attraction for him. The despised Ainah had taken with her, to her untimely grave, all the capability for love that there was in him.

Since that first walk, too, on the balcony, he had become a great inventor ; and his discovery of iron, he felt, would be the chief safeguard for his nation.

These were the principal subjects of thought for Realmah ; but there were others which will force themselves upon the minds of all poetic and imaginative people when they regard the unclouded heavens, and think of, or guess at, the great story which those heavens can tell them.

Perhaps a starlight night is the greatest instructor that is permitted, otherwise than in revelation, to address mankind. Realmah could not know what science has taught us. We now know that, in contemplating those heavens, we are looking at an historical scene which makes all other histories trivial and transitory. That speck of light which we call a star, is an emanation which proceeded from its origin thousands of years ago perhaps, and may not in any manner represent the state of the star at the present

day. Then, again, it is not as if we were reading the history of any one past period; but we are reading the commingled history of innumerable ages, widely distant from each other.<sup>1</sup> If men thoroughly entered into the spirit of this strange, weird scene, it would be the greatest cure for ambition, vanity, and avarice that has ever been devised.

*Milverton.* You see, Sir Arthur, that I have stolen your thunder.

Realmah, however, gazed upon it with the ignorant eyes of one comparatively a savage. And yet the wonderful scene had a strange influence upon him, and roused in his mind those thoughts which are common to all thinking men, and which, as we have seen, had before, on a remarkable occasion, been present to his mind; namely: "Whence am I? What am I? What am I here for? What does it all mean?"—thoughts which are never without a wild kind of melancholy, the melancholy of an inquiring and unsatisfied soul. And then he turned to business. There were motives which made him

<sup>1</sup> The idea in the text is very difficult to realize, or to express. To compare small things with great, this illustration may be used. It is as if a man of the present day were to see (not to read about, but to see) Lord George Gordon's riots, Louis the Fourteenth's conquest of Flanders, Charlemagne's slaughter of the Saxons, Hannibal's victory at Cannæ, the building of the hundred-gated Thebes, and weary Methuselah celebrating his seven hundredth birthday—all at the same time, these scenes having reached his eyes at the same moment, and being for him the story of the present day.

hesitate, now that the opportunity had come, to accept the greatness thrust upon him. I have said that, after the death of the Ainah, he had become ambitious. But still his nature was to a great extent like that of Hamlet, as described by our great poet, who felt it so hard that rough action, and dire struggle with the world around him, should be forced upon one who would far rather contemplate the ways of men than be in any measure mixed up with them.

Moreover, there was one thought that plagued Realmah, and drove him like a goad; namely, the consideration as to who should be his successor to the throne—for he was childless. After long pondering, he resolved that he would adopt some youth, the worthiest of the scions of those noble houses which had fallen from their high estate in the sudden revolution. With a sigh he congratulated himself, or rather the state, upon his being childless. "For," as he said to himself, "any child of mine might be most unworthy to succeed me; but it will be hard if I cannot discover one amongst these young men of noble family, who should be able to guide the kingdom when I am old, or dead." This thought soothed his mind; and, as the cold grey light of early morning broke in upon his meditations, he had completely made up his mind how to act, in every particular, on this, the greatest occasion of his life.

He had resolved, unhesitatingly, to be the King of the Sheviri.

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*Ellesmere.* I am an ass, an idiot, a dolt, a dunce, a blockhead, and a dunderhead. All the rough, rude things that my enemies say against me are true. All the utterances of the refined malice of my friends are true. Yes, Cranmer, you are right. I cannot be sure of doing a simple sum in addition correctly. Say what you like of me, all of you.

Whatever any theologian has said of any other theologian, who differs from him slightly, is true of me.

Whatever any editor of any Greek play has said of any former editor of the same Greek play, is true of me.

Whatever any elderly lady who attends the Billingsgate Market and sells fish, says of any other elderly lady engaged in the same vocation, who sells her fish at a lower price, is true of me.

Whatever any "Right Honourable friend" who has left the Cabinet, says of any other "Right Honourable friend" who remains in the Cabinet, is true of me.

*Sir Arthur.* No, no, Ellesmere; keep within some bounds.

*Mauleverer.* Whence comes this sudden burst of just, but long-deferred, self-appreciation?

*Ellesmere.* I have been puzzling my brain for weeks to find out what this man was at, and I now see that I ought to have perceived his drift at once. The first syllable of the word Realmah ought to have enlightened me. Of course he was to become king; and of course, he is to initiate a form of government, or a mode of foreign policy, which is to be eminently instructive in modern times.

I am disgusted. I have been bothered about all these love affairs: I have been worried about the smelting of iron-stones: my feelings—my tenderest feelings—have been



harrowed by the death of the Ainah ; and now I find that I have gone through all this suffering, only that I might become interested in the character and fortunes of Realmah, and therefore be induced to listen more patiently to the record of his official and diplomatic proceedings. I am a dupe.

Mr. Milverton did not make any reply to this outburst of Sir John Ellesmere's, but continued the reading of the story.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

##### THE KING PROVIDES AGAINST FAMINE : HIS COUNCILLORS.

REALMAH'S first care upon coming to the throne was to provide against the famine which threatened the inhabitants of Abibah. In his mode of doing this, he struck, as it were, the key-note of the policy he was about to pursue throughout his reign. He determined to persuade the Phelatahs to supply him with provisions. He accordingly addressed a letter to their chiefs.

It may surprise the reader to hear that there was any mode of communication amongst the dwellers in the Lake cities which can be likened to the writing of a letter.

The Peruvians kept their records by means of the *quippus*, which was a tassel composed of threads of

different colours, having knots in them at different lengths in the threads.

The inhabitants of the Lake cities had adopted a similar system, only that they used shells instead of threads; and the differences of form and colour of the shells corresponded with the differences of interval in the knotted lengths and of the colours of the threads in the Pervuan *quippus*. This seems a very rude and difficult mode of writing, but practice made it easy; and those who were much practised in it, could read and write with comparative facility.

Realmah's letter to the chiefs of the Phelatahs was as follows:—

*"Your eldest brother, I, Realmah, the King of the Sheviri, by Londardo with the four feathers, to the great Lords and Dividers of Bread of the Phelatahs, send greeting, and desire for them health, honour, wealth, and quails.*

[The four feathers were the insignia of an ambassador; and quails meant abundance, alluding to the immense flocks of those birds which, at certain times of the year, passed over those regions of the earth, and furnished the inhabitants with food for many days.]

*"The koopha,<sup>1</sup> when set free, forgets the hardship of its captivity, and remembers only the kindness that it received when it was in its cage. The great king's*

<sup>1</sup> Ring dove.

*heart is larger and more loving than that of the little koopha.*

*"What he did, whom you would wish to love as a friend, let it be as a bad dream, not to be thought over in the good daytime, for he did it mistakenly.*

*"For both, the same moon above; for both, the same waters beneath; the same day for both, when the almond trees, blossoming with joy, tell that summer has come back again: why should the Phelatahs and the Sheviri shoot arrows at each other? They should sing the same song on the same day to the dear summer when she returns to them.*

*"The wild bulls may stamp their forefeet as if to the sound of the mithral,<sup>1</sup> but if one moves out of the line, coming forward or drawing backward, all is lost, and the little young lions in their dens have much food.*

*"The men of the North are as a lion, and the young lions are many.*

*"Paravi<sup>2</sup> has been good to the Phelatahs, but has hidden her face from the Sheviri, and would not behold them. The good goddess makes things uneven so that good men may make them even again, for she is always wise and loving.*

*"The young maidens of Abibah droop like the lilies when the stars drink up the dew before the morning, and there is no rain. The mothers in Abibah almost wish that their children were dead, for they have no food to give them.*

<sup>1</sup> A musical instrument resembling the flute.

<sup>2</sup> The goddess of fertility.

*"What need I say more? The generous do not love to have many words said to them. It is I who have written this.*

*"I, Realmah, the King."*

We may smile at this extraordinary production, but there is something touching and tender, and not without dignity, in the way in which these poor people expressed their thoughts. It was a point of high diplomatic politeness not to say anything directly, but in tropes and similes, with proverbs and with fables; in fact, to write always allusively, but so that the allusions should be understood by any intelligent person cognizant of the facts.

This missive was entrusted to Londardo, who, without delay, was to proceed to Abinamanche.

His secret instructions were, to put himself into communication with Koorali, who was friendly to Realmah; to proclaim everywhere that the government had been thrust upon Realmah; that the King's main object was to unite all the people of the South against the threatened invasion of the North; and, if he found great difficulty in obtaining the main object of his mission, to declare very plainly that the Sheviri would come and take the food they wanted, and that desperate men were desperate enemies to deal with.

The above commands were given in full council to Londardo. There was, however, another instruction, most secret, given by the King alone. It was to the effect that Londardo might delicately ridicule the King,

showing by shrugs of the shoulder and smiles, and dubious words uttered only to a few of the Phelatahs, very confidentially ("It will spread enough," said Realmah), that he, Londardo, thought their new King almost a maniac on the subject of his fears of the men of the North. "Possess them with that idea," said the subtle Realmah, "convince them that I mean to be an ally, and not an enemy, and so we may prevent their fighting us now—now, when my people are hunger-stricken, and my power is not confirmed." Londardo succeeded in his mission, and thus the first difficulty in Realmah's reign was overcome.

Londardo was one of Realmah's chief councillors; and, before proceeding to enumerate the principal events of the reign, it will be well to give an account of these men. They were selected by the King from the four councils that had been attached to the four chiefs who had ruled over the town.

First there was Lariska, who was thought to be the wisest man in the kingdom. But there were great drawbacks upon his wisdom. He spun out innumerable arguments, and had always a great deal to produce for, or against, any given course of action. There was, however, this terrible defect in him—that an argument was valued according to its purely argumentative value, rather than according to the nature of the thing it touched. For example: if there were an argument which affected eighty parts of the transaction debated upon—the whole transaction being

represented by the number one hundred—to Lariska that argument was not of more value, and not more to be insisted upon, than some argument which affected only one one-hundredth part of the transaction, but which was interesting and curious as an argument. In short, as the Court jester observed, Lariska never made any difference in his nets, whether for panthers or for rabbits.

Then there was Bibi. He was really a very able man; but he habitually placed the expression of his opinion under severe restraint; and his mode of declaring approval, or disapproval, was so cold, that Realmah had to study Bibi's lightest words in order to ascertain what he really meant. Realmah used to invite Bibi frequently to his table, and was wont to talk to him upon State affairs when the strongest bowls of mead had circulated freely round the board.

Then there was Delaimah-Daree, who was a wonderful man, not only for producing arguments, but for suggesting resources. His extraordinary fertility, however, dwarfed his powers of conclusiveness; and, after an admirable speech in council, Realmah did not know how Delaimah-Daree wished any question to be settled. The lines of his thought were all parallel, and never met in a focus. As Philip van Artevelde says of the mind of some councillor—

“A mind it is  
Accessible to reason's subtlest rays,  
And many enter there, but none converge.”

Then there was that burly old man, full of sagacity, named Brotah. He always took a common-sense view of every matter, and his counsel was often most valuable; but he was greatly influenced by personal feelings. He said what he said, because somebody else had said the other thing. You had therefore to abstract from his advice the personality of it, before you could tell whether it was either good or bad. It was to be observed of Brotah that he delighted at being in a minority.

Then there was Lavoura, a refined and delicate-minded man, who always suggested indirect and sometimes sinister ways. You were never to meet the matter in hand directly; but you were to do, or say, something quite remote from it, which was to come back in some wonderful manner upon the question at issue. Had Realmah known the principle of the boomerang, he would have called Lavoura his boomerang councillor. Realmah himself was a little too much inclined at times to adopt Lavoura's advice—not seeing that this is not the right way for a great king to govern.

Then there was Delemnah—a bluff, coarse, sensible man, who never was for adopting a roundabout way, or even a delicate way of doing anything, but believed in brute force, and almost worshipped it. He and Lavoura generally spoke against one another in council.

Then there was Marespi. He did not indulge in many opinions of his own; but, after a matter had

been much debated by others, he had the keenest perception of how the votes would go, and was fond of being on the winning side. He was immensely guided by what was said out of doors of any measure of the Government; and a tumult in the street was a thing that quite ruled his views of policy.

Then there was Londardo. He was a man with a large noble mask of a face, with very bright black eyes, who indulged in obstreperous laughter, and had a habit of rubbing his hands together in a boisterous manner that expressed the continual joy and fun that was bubbling up in him. He was a very sensible person, and absolutely invaluable as a peace-maker. In the pleasantest manner he could tell two councillors, who were about to quarrel, that they were two fools; and he would even get up from the council-table, and shake them, contriving with exquisite tact, perhaps, to make a remark that should tend to conciliate the opponents, such as, "You are the last two men who should ever disagree, for did I not hear him say of you the other day, that you were one of the best of men, and one of the cleverest of us all? Now do not be fools. We have not time for folly; and if we disagree amongst ourselves, how are the people to be governed?" He was the man who proposed that refreshments should always be brought in when there was a council, and would contrive that the eating time should arrive very opportunely. He was of great service to the King, performing that part of



rude conciliation which it would have been quite undignified for Realmah himself to undertake.

In the higher circles of the Sheviri there were always stories current about Londardo. It was told of him that, when debates at the council were dull, he would absolutely have the audacity to go to sleep; but that, somehow or other, when he woke up, it always seemed as if he knew all about what was going on. There was a story, too, of how, at a council in the first year of Realmah's reign, when the King had made some subtle proposal, Londardo had observed, "Well, you are the craftiest young chief that ever sat upon a throne; but do not be so over-clever; for, after all, kings should be plain, blunt sort of fellows—something like me, only with better manners."

Also, on a memorable occasion, when there was great division in the council, and when a tumult of discord arose amongst the councillors, Londardo got up, and placed his broad back against the door, saying, "Now I do not care a snail's shell how the thing goes. One way is as good as another, and the arguments for and against anything are always about equal; but one way you must go, and you do not pass through this door till you are all of one mind as to which way that shall be. Right or wrong, decide something; and stick to it." And they did decide something; and did stick to it.

Then there was Llama-Mah. He was an adroit, clever man, but withal a poor creature, a thorough

flatterer by nature, whose only object at a council was to discern what was the King's opinion upon any matter, and to vote as the King would wish. Realmah, at first, could not endure this man, and was, for some time, very cold in his demeanour to him. But the allurements of flattery and of constant assent are so powerful, that, eventually, the great King was overcome by the assiduities of Llama-Mah, and began to look upon him as one of his truest friends. It was, at last, "My good Llama-Mah has said it;" or "Llama-Mah has made a very sound observation;" or "We must wait to hear what Llama-Mah will say."

Let this not be wondered at. A life-time is so short, and life is so difficult, that we are glad to avail ourselves of the services of any human creature who is good enough, and wise enough, always to be of our opinion.

Lastly, there was Litervi, who was more of a judge than a councillor. He seemed to have no ideas of his own, and always managed to speak last, summing up carefully, and with great discrimination, what the others had counselled.

It is not to be supposed that these able men are thoroughly described in these short characters given of them, or that they acted always consistently with these characters. Sometimes Delemnah was timid. Sometimes Lavoura was brave. Sometimes Delaimah-Daree was conclusive. Sometimes Londardo was not sweet-tempered. Sometimes, but very rarely,

Litervi hazarded a remark of his own. This was not altogether from inconsistency; but men know what others think of them, and how they are expected to think and act, and, as they do not like to be shut up in a character, they sometimes go in quite a contrary way to that which they know is expected of them.

Besides, there are profound inconsistencies of character. Litervi, the most cautious of men, who adored delay, was, during the twenty-four hours that preceded Realmah's accession to the throne, the most bold and unscrupulous of councillors; and you could perceive that there was in the same man the nature of a daring conspirator, and of a timid and procrastinating judge.

It may seem surprising that so many eminent men should have been collected together in one council; but the truth is, that among semi-civilized people, as amongst boys at school, and young men at college, the right persons are almost always chosen. It is true that there were strong lines of demarcation of rank among the Sheviri, and there was no chance of any man being made a councillor who was not in the highest class; but in that class the most just and wise choice was made of men fit to counsel and to rule.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The idea of a man's wealth being any reason why he should be made a councillor would have been one impossible for the Sheviri to contemplate. They would not even have thought it a joke, but rather a suggestion made by a man about to have a fever, if any one had suggested that Pom-Pom, the richest man in Abibah, but one of the most foolish, should be made a councillor. In fact, they thought that a

Such were the councillors with whom Realmah undertook to govern the great kingdom of the Sheviri, which, under his government, gradually increased until it embraced an extent of country three hundred and seventy miles in length, and something like one hundred and eighty in breadth.

It was a piece of good fortune for Realmah that he was one of those men who could listen carefully to counsel of various kinds, and have the courage to abide by it, or neglect it, as it suited his great purposes.

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*Ellesmere.* Well, now we have Realmah and his councillors before us, and a precious set of crafty scoundrels they are. I know this, that I should not have liked to have lived in that time, and to have been a chief possessing any territory within 300 miles' distance from Abibah. I feel certain that I should have been absorbed by these Marespis, Llama-Mahs, and Realmahs.

I suspect we have all sat for our portraits, and that bits of us, at any rate, are to be found in the characters of these councillors. I do not, however, see any Mauleverer amongst them. Probably Realmah thought that he could do all the melancholy part of the business for himself. There is no mention made of a clerk of the council, but I suppose, when he is described, that Cranmer will sit for the councillor should be a man able to give counsel. But then semi-savages are so blunt and rude, and childish in their ideas; and their ways of going on are quite different from those of civilized people.

portrait—a good, steady official man, with no nonsense about him, having no regard for fables or falsities of any kind, except perhaps for Potochee and her crew, because age would have rendered any institution respectable in his eyes, even that of wizardry and witchcraft.

But I must go and play a game of quoits with Tommy Jessom.

By the way, it would be a good thing in any council to have a boy. His counsel would be so direct and honest, and he would not make long speeches.

After a fearful speech by Lariska, or by that other fellow who never brought his manifold suggestions to a point, what a treat it would be to hear Tommy Jessom exclaim, "I vote we go in and lick 'em," or, "I vote we cave in." I do not pledge myself to explain the exact meaning of the expression "cave in;" but Tommy has taught it me: and I observe he always uses it when he is about to yield to my superior prowess.

A woman, too, would be a great acquisition to a council, as bringing an amount of common sense and steady regard for present advantage which are often wanting in a council composed of men only.

There! Have I not compensated by this speech for all the rude truths I may have uttered during my life-time about women? You may kiss my hand, Mildred and Blanche, in token of your gratitude.

Here Ellesmere held out his hand, but only received a sharp slap upon it from his wife, whereupon he went away declaiming loudly against the inveterate ingratitude of women. The others followed him, and our party was broken up for the day.

## CHAPTER XI.

I MUST make some apology for what I am going to narrate in this chapter. I have been asked to give the story, written by myself, to which I alluded in a former chapter; and, as a sensible young lady sits down to play at the piano when she is asked, whether she is a good or an indifferent performer, so I think I had better give this story at once rather than show any tiresomely modest reluctance to do so.

On the day when I told the story, we met in the study, after luncheon, for the weather was stormy, and the gentlemen were not inclined to venture out. The ladies, however, had gone to hear a confirmation sermon. Mr. Milverton began the conversation.

*Milverton.* We are to have something new to-day. Johnson is going to give us a bit of his experience of life.

*Ellesmere.* Babes and sucklings! A discourse on coral, eh?

Sir John seemed to have forgotten, or pretended to have forgotten, that he had himself asked me to write a story.

*Milverton.* I can tell you it is very good, and very deep.

*Ellesmere.* Oh yes! we know! Milverton has a forty-woman power of prejudice in favour of his friends. Anything that they do must be admirable. And, as for his secretary, who is part of himself, whatever he does is good enough for the *Revue des deux Mondes*.

I wonder what mischief Sandy has been hatching. I have observed he has been very thoughtful lately, and has been an execrable companion. O Sandy the clever one! drinker-in of wisdom from many fountains of that fluid! And oh the delight of a well-woven story that agitates the mind with pleasing alternations of hope and fear!

*Milverton.* What do you mean, Ellesmere, by that nonsense?

*Ellesmere.* It is an imitation, and not a bad one, I think, of one of Paul Louis Courier's best bits.

He was ridiculing some of the French lawyers for their habit of apostrophizing, which, however, he said he had adopted himself; for, when at home, he did not ask his servant Nicole simply to bring his slippers, but exclaimed, "*O mes pantoufles! et toi, Nicole, et toi!*" And so, instead of asking Sandy to give us his story, I exclaim, "Oh the cleverness of Sandy! And oh the beauty of a good story!"

But what is it about, though? A treatise, in the disguise of a story, on weights and measures? An essay, disguised as a tale, on the system of decimal notation? If it is, I go. Friendship has its limits. I like Sandy very much; but one must draw a line somewhere: and I draw the line by refusing to listen to any essay on decimal notation, even from my dearest friend.

*Milverton.* Make your mind quite easy, Ellesmere; and, Alick, do not wait for any more talk, but begin at once.

*Johnson.* I begin by saying that it has always been admitted that the Scotch possess peculiar prophetic powers, as I may instance by their well-known powers of second sight. And now I commence my story.

When I was a youth I went to visit my uncle, a small tenant-farmer and fisherman, who lived in the extreme north of Scotland on the sea-side. Boy-like, I was always about amongst the boats, which were new things to one who had hitherto lived far inland. One morning I succeeded, by dint of great efforts, in pushing my uncle's boat down to the margin of the sea. I got into it, and rocked it about from side to side. In a few minutes it happened that a great wave came rushing up the shore—a ninth wave, I suppose it was—and when the recoil of the waters came, the boat, to my dismay, was afloat; and a strong wind from the shore carried me out to sea.

*Ellesmere.* Of course you had some haggis with you?

*Johnson.* No, Sir John; but I had two bannocks which my good aunt had given me after breakfast, knowing that I should not return to the house for hours. But I had no water. For three days I was driven further and further out to sea. What I suffered from thirst no man, who has not gone through similar suffering, can imagine. I think I should have died if it had not been for a slight shower which fell at the end of the second day, some drops of which I caught in my bonnet.

On the morning of the fourth day, after my departure, I neared an island. To my great astonishment, a number of people were on the shore and made signs of welcome to me. The moment I landed, a young girl handed me a beautiful shell, full of water.

The people were all dressed in a fashion quite unknown



to me. After turning me round several times, and pulling about my clothes in the way in which savages examine the dress of civilized men, and asking me many questions which I could neither fully understand nor answer, I was taken to the hut, near the shore, of the father of the girl who had given me the water. His name was Pitou. Her name was Effra. They showed me a couch of heather ; gave me some dried fish to eat ; and, after I had eaten it, I lay down and went to sleep for four-and-twenty hours.

When I awoke, and was refreshed with food, I went out of the hut, and wandered about the island. It was very beautiful. Doubtless the beneficent Gulf Stream made the surrounding waters warm and the climate temperate.

The language was very like Scotch : indeed it was Scotch, only that there were many old words in it such as I had never heard any one but my grandfather make use of. I soon became familiar with the language. It is such an easy thing to learn a language when one is taught by a girl like Effra.

I was allowed to roam about the island as I pleased ; but, to my dismay, I found that my boat had been hauled up some distance from the beach, and had been firmly fastened to stakes driven into the earth, so that I could not move it.

After I had been a few weeks in the island, Pitou asked me if I would like to see the House of Wisdom. He did not use the word " wisdom," but said the House of Direction for Head, Heart, and Hand. You will readily consent to my abridging the title.

I assented to Pitou's suggestion. We then went to the only building of any pretension to architecture in the island. I had often noticed it in my rambles ; but had never ventured to approach it, thinking it to be the residence of the chief of the island, who might not approve of my

coming into his presence unsent for. The first persons I saw, and who were in a sort of out-house, had a painful, anxious, subdued look about them, most unpleasant to behold. They glanced at me for a moment, and then seemed to look far away over my head. Then they muttered something to one another which I could not understand.

"Those are the Spoolans," said Pitou to me. It is almost impossible to give an idea of the contempt which Pitou threw into his pronunciation of the word "Spoolans." "Two foolish old fellows," he added.

Now, they were not old. One was quite young, and the other only middle-aged. What can Pitou mean? I thought.

After making a gesture of contempt, which was done by bringing his two hands together close to his mouth, and then throwing them suddenly from his mouth, as if he said "I have collected all their merits together, and find them to be naught," Pitou departed. I could not help looking back at these two poor men, who must have seen this gesture; but they were evidently used to such demonstrations, and merely looked wistfully over Pitou's head into the far country and the distant sea.

We then went into a shed on the right hand of the principal building. Here there were six men. These men also looked very miserable, but there was not that abject and hopeless appearance about them that there had been about the Spoolans. They were better clothed too; the Spoolans were in rags. I made my bow, and then Pitou said to me, "The Raths!" Then he added, "It's no good staying here. Come on;" but, as we departed, he did not make any gesture of contempt.

We then ascended a flight of steps which led to the

principal building. It consisted of three chambers on the lower story, and two on the upper.

We went into the left-hand room on the lower story. There were five men here. They were well-dressed, and, though exceedingly thoughtful, did not seem to be unhappy. Pitou made a bow to them, and then saying to me, "The Uraths," conducted me out of the apartment.

We then went into the right-hand chamber. Here there were four men. These were handsomely dressed, were evidently in good spirits, and altogether in good case. Pitou made three low obeisances ; and, as if introducing me, said, "The Auraths," and then added, "The Boy from the Black Land." I made my obeisances, imitating Pitou, and we walked out.

We then entered the centre chamber. Here were seated two men, very well dressed and very jovial-looking, and with an imperious air about them. When Pitou came into their presence, he was abject. It was not merely that he indulged in bows and genuflexions ; but he almost crawled before them. "The Mauraths," he said ; and then pointing to me, "Your servant from the Black Land."

I then made sundry bows—I could not condescend to crawl, like Pitou—and we quitted that apartment.

Then we went upstairs into a sort of ante-chamber, that was crowded with people. A way, however, was made for us, and we entered the principal chamber of the building. Here was seated, in great state, a coarse, fat, jovial-looking, rubicund man, who seemed to me to spend half his time in laughing about nothing. He was waited upon by persons who knelt to him. If Pitou had been abject before, in approaching the Mauraths, it was nothing compared to his abjectness now. He pulled me down on the ground, and

dragging me after him, crawled to the feet of the laughing man. Then he said, "The Amaurath;" and afterwards, pointing to me, "Your slave from the Black Land." Then, shading his face with his hands, as if he could not bear the splendour of the jolly chief's commonplace countenance, Pitou crawled backwards, pulling me with him.

Then we went home. I should think that on the face of the earth that day there was not a more puzzled and bewildered individual than I was. As we walked home I remained silent; but Pitou kept exclaiming, "O the beloved young man! O the beautiful Being! O the Basketful of Direction for Head, Heart, and Hand!" I thought Pitou had gone crazy, especially as I understood him to apply these exclamations to the stout, rubicund, middle-aged, laughing gentleman we had just left.

After I had a little overcome my amazement, I questioned Pitou and Effra as to what all this meant. It was not until after many hours' talk on that and on the succeeding day that I began to understand the whole matter.

These twenty men whom I had seen in the House of Wisdom were prophets, or were supposed to be prophets. At any rate, they had remarkable gifts of foresight. But these gifts differed very much in value. For instance, the wretched Spoolans only foresaw what would happen after a hundred years had passed: the unfortunate Raths, what would happen after twenty-seven years: the Uraths, after a year: the Auraths, after a month: the Mauraths, after three days: while the great Amaurath, that genial prophet and potentate, could foretell what would happen after the next six hours. The extent of their prophetic powers was after this fashion—that each set of prophets foresaw for as long a time as that which had to elapse between the present and the time at which

their power came into play. For instance, the Amaurath's duration of prophetic vision, if I may so describe it, was for six hours : that of the Mauraths for three days : and so on with all the rest.

The latter four classes foresaw only, or chiefly, material damage or material good. Moreover, they could not explain much about their prophecies. They could not tell you about the means to the ends which they foresaw ; while on the other hand the despised Rathes and Spoolans had great width and depth of foresight. But who cares to know what will happen twenty-seven years hence, still less what will happen a hundred years hence ? I now quite understood the sorry garb of the Rathes, and the absolute rags of the Spoolans.

As time went on I became familiar with the inhabitants of the House of Direction for Head, Heart, and Hand. The jolly old chief would laugh his loudest when he saw his slave from the Black Land. These people had somewhat of an aversion and distrust for any person who lived upon a continent. They used to say, the bigger the land he comes from, the worse the man ; and they preferred to remain quite isolated from the rest of the world. They naturally supposed me to come from a continent ; but gradually they came to tolerate me, and were very kind to me.

This freedom of entry into the great House would have given anybody much knowledge of the world who had brought any of such knowledge to begin with. But I was a simple youth of eighteen, and could profit but little by what I heard. The world seemed then to me, and indeed seems now, like a play, or an opera, acted before you in a language you do not understand.

There are very emphatic gestures ; and the principal performers come together in twos, threes, and fours ; and they

lift up their hands, and appeal to the audience very earnestly about something. They do not seem to have much to say to one another.

Then somebody seems to hate somebody else very much, but you do not make out why. Also somebody, always a tenor (why tenors should be the only men who ever fall in love I cannot understand), loves some soprano very much, and there is a stage embrace, which does not seem to count for much ; especially as the gentleman and lady on the stage make most of their love respectively to a lady and gentleman apparently in the upper gallery.

Then there is a chorus of very clean peasants, who never have anything to do with clay soils, and who seem happy, and are certainly noisy, about something ; and then there is some dancing, of which you cannot exactly construe the meaning. And then there is a good deal of scuffling amongst the minor performers ; but whatever they do, it never interferes with the singing of the principal performers. The politeness is wonderful ; fetters are never put by the little people on the great people until they have quite finished their songs.

And then somebody, generally the principal lady or gentleman, seems resolved to die, and takes a long time about it, but keeps in good voice, if not in good heart to the end. And then the curtain falls down, and he or she comes on looking very smiling and gracious ; and then the audience rush away to catch cold in the passages.

When you go home and have to tell the story of the play, and endeavour to do so, it must often be a story that differs considerably from the one that you were intended to listen to and understand.

But I suppose one makes out quite as much, and quite as

accurately, about this play-story as about the story of the men and women who surround you.

Now here was an opportunity for getting nearer to the heart of things, and making out what people really wished for ; but, as I said before, this grand opportunity was given to a mere lad. Still I remarked some things which, perhaps, were worth observing.

I was with the Raths one day. I used to frequent the rooms of those who could prophesy distant things to a degree that astonished the other inhabitants of the island. Suddenly there entered a handsome young man who was celebrated for his skill in minstrelsy. He had come to ask the question whether he would be famous in future years. The Raths told him that neither his fame, nor even his name, nor the songs he sang, nor the music which he sang them to, would be known to any human being in twenty-seven years' time. He went away very sad ; and I noticed that the mean fellow carried off some honey-cakes which he had doubtless brought as a present if the response should be favourable. The Raths looked wistfully after the honey-cakes ; but they were obliged to tell the truth : and they told it, and remained hungry.

Again, everywhere throughout the building there was a buzzing sound, on the days of audience, of the word " Beans," or something like it. Beans, beans, beans, nothing but beans. I was puzzled at first, but soon found out that a wild bean, much smaller than ours, passed for money ; and there were constant questions about beans addressed to the short-time prophets. Would beans be more or less valuable ? would there be many found this year ? A whole boat-load of these beans had once come from a neighbouring island, and had been exchanged for

dried fish and other articles of small value. The disturbance this had caused amongst the beaned (I mean the moneyed) men of the island was fearful ; and a frequent question was whether any such pestilential cargo would soon come again.

The prophets took no share in the government of the island. But they were often secretly consulted by the ruling men, or by those who aspired to rule. It surprised me greatly, at first, to find that the ruling men consulted only the short-time prophets. Certainly one old chief did ask a question of the Uraths while I was there ; but he was the only one who did so. The Mauraths or the Amaurath were the prophets chiefly consulted by politicians. I thought this very strange ; but Mr. Milverton tells me that not only in this little island of mine, but elsewhere, the politicians would be quite contented with veritable prophecies for six hours, or three days, or at the most for a month.

I wondered that lovers never came to the Rathes, or even to the Uraths ; but I found that they were too sure about their future to care for asking questions respecting it. One poor fellow, a melancholy bachelor (the rarest thing in that island), had once asked a question of the Uraths about his prospects of happiness after the first year of marriage. His name was Toulvi, and that of his beloved, Dalumma. Dalumma, hearing of this question (all the prophets were addicted to gossiping), refused poor Toulvi ; and no other young woman ever listened to his advances.

I expected that unpleasant questions would be asked about life and death. But this was never done. It had been tried in former years ; but mankind, at least the mankind of that island, could not endure such knowledge.



Besides, there were very ugly stories of sons and wives having asked questions about the lives of heads of families—questions asked in the purest spirit of conjugal and filial tenderness ; but, somehow or other, the husbands and fathers did not take it well ; and the practice was very wisely discontinued. It was a beautiful arrangement connected with this prophetic power, that, with rare exceptions, the prophets had no knowledge of future events, unless distinct questions were submitted to them respecting these events.

The questions chiefly asked were of a very humble kind ; and were asked more by fishermen, and husbandmen, and handicraftsmen than by any other classes in society. In truth, in good society, if I may use such an expression as regards the society amongst those who may be considered semi-savages (for they had no newspapers), it was not thought very good taste to be seen in the House of Wisdom. Any foreknowledge was an agitating and vulgar thing : it tended to democracy : it made people dissatisfied with the goings on of their ancestors and of the ruling classes ; and it was, very judiciously, voted to be vulgar.

My sympathy was with the Spoolans. Such melancholy I have never seen upon the faces of any human beings as that which was indented upon theirs. And yet the things they prophesied were mostly pleasant. According to them, the race of these islanders was always to improve in sagacity and gentleness. But that foreknowledge seemed to make them (the Spoolans) dreadfully discontented with the present state of things. I suspect that there will prove to be the usual counterbalancing drawbacks to all the good things the Spoolans prophesied ; but they seemed to believe only in the good. And they always wore the aspect that is to be seen in sanguine men, when the things they have hoped

for, and schemed for, do not come to pass—at least in their time.

Once a year (luckily it happened while I was in the island) the Spoolans were called in to make mirth for an evening, by narrating what would begin to happen in one hundred years' time, and would continue to happen for a hundred years. What they said was in the highest degree interesting to me. I listened to them with breathless attention, but the rest of their auditors were, for the most part, convulsed with laughter—even when calamity was prophesied. And yet there were traditions showing how truly the Spoolans of a former age had spoken.

For instance, the chiefs who ruled the island now were of a conquering race who had subdued the original inhabitants. The Spoolans had foretold the coming of these conquerors. The Spoolans had only met with ridicule.

When the calamity had in two more generations approached much more closely, the Rathes began to utter their forebodings. One or two chiefs (and it is remarkable that they were amongst the oldest) endeavoured to warn the people, and to suggest fortifications. But nobody heeded them. All the middle-aged men said to themselves: "This is an affair for our children. Meanwhile we have to be predominant in the Great Council to-day, which is hard work enough for us."

Then it came to the Uraths to prophesy upon this coming invasion. A little stir was made then; but men said, "If the invasion is to come in a year, it must come: we cannot do more than we are doing. Our forefathers really ought to have looked to this matter. It is disgraceful to see how careless men are about the fortunes of those who are to succeed them."

It need hardly be said that the island was easily conquered ; and that the ancient inhabitants had to submit to the new dynasty, as the Chinese to the Tartars.

I must not weary my hearers any longer. You will, of course, know that I escaped from the island ; for here I am. My personal adventures are not worth listening to ; but I thought you might like to hear about an island which possesses such a wonderful institution as that which is to be found in the House of Wisdom of Tele-Ma-Malakah, which means the "Bridal Pearl of the Sea."

*Ellesmere.* Well, Sandy, I must congratulate you. You will evidently become a great writer of fiction. Only, my dear fellow, avoid preciseness. Observe the great Sir Arthur : you would not have caught him placing his island in any waters near home ; and then your foreseeing people are too clearly distinguished one from another by your naming distinct periods for their prophetic powers. "*Nemo repente fuit falsissimus*," which means "no one tells plausible lies," or writes fiction well, without a good deal of practice.

For my own part I should have liked to have heard more about Effra. Doubtless she aided in your escape, and won over a foster-brother ; and then you and she and he were wrecked on the rocks at Brixton, somewhere near where the railway station is now. You know there is, or was, such a river as Effra at Brixton. The name was unquestionably derived from your Effra. Some foolish antiquaries—but they are always in the wrong—might contend that it was an Anglo-Saxon name which the said river had enjoyed for a thousand years. But never mind. What says the poet?—

"Whate'er, my friend, you say, whate'er you write,  
Keep probability well out of sight."

She, I mean your Effra, was very beautiful, was she not?  
*Johnson.* Indeed she was.

[My readers will imagine that there was a young lady whom I could describe.]

She had a horizontal face, and——

*Ellesmere.* What on earth does the boy mean by a horizontal face?

*Sir Arthur.* I understand.

*Johnson.* A forehead which is so set in the hair that it shows squarely—straight eyebrows—straight lips, though full; in fact, all the lines which principally attracted your attention, were horizontal.

*Ellesmere.* A civil engineer's description of his love. But I do see what Sandy means. When she smiled, the dimples spread horizontally and not vertically. I declare, though, I believe there never was such a description of a young woman given before. You certainly are an original fellow, Sandy.

The moral of your tale is a shade too obvious. We all know that short-time prophets are the people worth attending to in this short-time world. If anybody will be good enough to tell me what Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli will do next week, I shall be very much obliged to him, whether the much-foreseeing man is called a Maurath or not. And, in truth, I should be one of those who would crawl before the laughing Amaurath, a worthy man who could tell me, on the last day of the debate, better even than Mr. Brand or Colonel Taylor, what the division would be. Down with the Raths and the Spoolans, say I. If such

fellows were listened to, we might have good sense prevailing in the world, which would be a very dull thing.

My complaint of the world, which I beg leave to make very loudly, is this—that there is too much of everything. A conservatory is always too full of flowers to please me ; a city, of inhabitants ; a dinner, of dishes ; a speech, of words ; a concert, of songs ; a museum, of curiosities ; a picture-gallery, of pictures ; a sermon, of texts ; an evening party, of guests : and so I could go on enumerating, for an hour at least, all the things which are too full in this fulsome world. I use fulsome in the original sense.

You remember the witty saying of a French traveller. When asked about his travels he pithily exclaimed, “ *Il y a quelque chose de trop dans tous les pays—les habitants.* ”

And so say I, there is always “ *quelque chose de trop* ” in everything human. With one exception, however. There are not too much good sense and foresight in mankind. Now, Sandy would make us all wise and foreseeing, or at least borrowers of wisdom and foresight from his old Spoolans. I quite understand why everybody thought them old.

In fact, Sandy would make us all into Scotchmen. Now the Scotch are pleasant and useful fellows in their way. In truth, they have done wonderful things, and have made their little rugged country occupy a great space in men's hearts and minds.

But I decline to belong to a universe of Scotchmen.

There would be no such unproductive sports left in the world as leap-frog. And every joke would be sat upon by a jury.

No, Sandy, whatever other mischief you may do, beware of bringing too much good sense and foresight into the

world. Good-bye, I am going to walk. Come along, Fairy. Every dog would be made useful, and have to draw a cart. And the immense fun and affection that there are in dogs would all be worked out of them. They would come home in the evening to their wives and families, as dull as men of business. It shan't happen in my time, if I can prevent it.

[So saying, he whistled to Fairy, and off they went together.]

*Sir Arthur.* There was one passage in the story that I hardly think was yours, Mr. Johnson ; and, in fact, I hope it was not. I accuse Mr. Milverton of it.

*Johnson.* Which was it, Sir Arthur ?

*Sir Arthur.* The illustration of human life taken from an opera heard by you in some language not known to you. That passage was too old for you, and a little too cynical, I thought.

*Milverton.* Well, that was mine : it really was almost the only thing I did insert ; but I did not mean it to be cynical.

I know very well what you mean—that a young man is too much delighted by his early operas to take much notice of the comic element in them.

Now I go beyond that, and must confess I am greatly amused by the real life at a play or an opera, and by what goes on behind the scenes : things which would have disgusted me, as being unpleasantly real, when I was young.

*Sir Arthur.* I do not know exactly what you allude to.

*Milverton.* The reproachful look of the severe conductor when he turns to quell some of his band who are too loud or too fast ; the anxiety of the stage-manager who at the side is tempestuously waving his flag to "supers" who will

not come on at the right time ; the gay chattering with some friend at the side scenes of the great tragic lady who is just coming on with the dire intention of killing herself, and a child or two ; the good-natured ballet-girl who is adjusting a wreath, to make it more becoming, upon some other ballet-girl, or smoothing down her friend's skirts ; the pot of porter which the high tragic actor is consuming with considerable relish ; the perplexity of the scene-shifter when the scenes won't go rightly together, and an obstinate old oak-tree will cut into the middle of a cottage ; the busy carpenters in the flies giving the final touches to their work ; the abrupt change of demeanour which occurs when the chief tenor and soprano have gone off the stage with their arms round each other, or in some loving attitude, and they part at the side-scenes as a lady and gentleman who have a slight acquaintance with one another, and perhaps a considerable dislike : all these things amuse my foolish mind ; and I like to sit in a box which will give me a good view of them.

*Mauleverer.* Do not forget the choruses. How beautiful is their unanimity ! How I wish that there was anything like it in common life ! The same gesture, the same question, the same reproach, the very same words, seem to occur to all these excellent men at the same moment. Hands, arms, legs, eyes, eyebrows, all move together. They make use of the same exclamation : if one says " hah ! " they all say " hah ! " Of " ohs " and " ehs " and " hahs " and " hums " there is no unpleasant variety.

*Milverton.* As the French song says,—

" Quand un gendarme rit,  
Tous les gendarmes rient,  
Dans la gendarmerie."

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*Sir Arthur.* I declare we have gone into quite a discussion of the proceedings at operas and plays. It is all your fault, Milverton, as it was you who introduced that illustration into Mr. Johnson's clever story, which illustration, forgive me for saying so, was evidently lugged in, and had no proper relation to "Spoolans" or "Uraths."

[After this the conversation ended.]



## CHAPTER XII.

IT was agreed that the reading to-day should be in the drawing-room, in order that the ladies might be able to go on with their work (they were very busy preparing for some fancy fair) while we were talking or reading.

Before the reading commenced, there was an interesting conversation, which began in this way :

*Milverton.* I have just been into your room, Ellesmere, to see about the chimney, which they say smokes.

*Ellesmere.* Pray don't trouble yourself. There is a proper concatenation in all human affairs. One must have a smoky chimney when one has a scolding wife.

*Milverton.* I saw Dickens's "American Notes" on your table, and, looking at it, I came upon a passage about solitary confinement. I suppose it is the dreadful punishment which Dickens says it is, and in which he is supported by Mr. Reade in "Never Too Late to Mend;" but I have always fancied that I could bear a little of this solitary confinement very well.

See what advantages there are :—

No letters.

No choice given you about your food.

Lots of time for thinking about and inventing things.

No servants to manage.

No visitors to entertain.

The chief pain of life is in deciding ; and there, in your solitary cell, there would be no occasion to decide anything.

*Ellesmere.* I agree with you. Life becomes more and more tiresome from our having more and more to decide. Now, at a dinner-party, they *will* bother you with two sorts of soup, two kinds of fish, and innumerable wines.

*Mauleverer.* Very wrong of the host to throw such a weight of responsibility upon his guests. One is sure to believe that one has chosen indiscreetly, to feel that it is irremediable, and to be tormented by regret throughout the dinner for one's error—say, in the choice of the soup. I have often felt that.

*Sir Arthur.* I always admired the plan that great Catholic monarchs had of going into retirement in some monastery for two or three weeks.

*Milverton.* I am afraid they received despatches. Now, in solitary confinement, one should have ceased to be a person to whom anybody could address anything.

It would be better than being in a yacht—at least to any one who is apt to be sea-sick.

*Sir Arthur.* There would be no bells to molest you. The three great evils in life are noise, poverty, and popularity. Nobody can tell what I have suffered from noise in the course of my life. It has been an act of great forbearance on my part to endure dogs, for I do so much detest their barking. The weak part of their character is, that they will bark, in season and out of season, for good reason, or for no reason at all—generally the latter. I love

horses, because they make so little noise. Rabbits, too, and white mice are——

*Ellesmere.* I will not have a word said against dogs. They are the best fellows I know. Sir Arthur objects to their barking ; why does he not object to men's talking ? Pray, sir, by which have you been most bored : by the injudicious barking of dogs, or by the foolish talk of men ? Do dogs make two hours' speeches to convey ideas (ideas ?) which might have been conveyed in ten minutes ?

Of course, if I wished to run them down—that is, if I were a base and ungrateful man—I too could say something against them. They are a little too prone to be vulgarly aristocratic, for my taste,—too apt to despise poor and ragged people, and to bark at their heels. But then, again, if they are on the other side of the House, if they belong to poor and ragged persons, they have a proper respect for rags and poverty, and sniff contemptuously at carriage people. In short, they partake the errors and vices of their masters : that is all. Milverton's dogs howl philosophy ; Sir Arthur's whine poetry ; Mauleverer's (epicurean dogs those !) discern great difference between different kinds of bones : and mine bark at everybody, just like me, without doing any harm to anybody.

In general, dogs have rather too much love for good society—a failing which they partake with most of us. We all like to visit the best people, as they are called. So with dogs. The kitchen is warm, its atmosphere is rich with unctuous and savoury odours, the cook is kind ; but the parlour is preferred by the dog, from an innate love of high society.

I do not believe there has been any instance of a man committing suicide when he has had a dog to love

him. Move for a return, Mr. Cranmer, and you will find I am right.

As regards friendship, the very word would have been unknown but for dogs. Does not Max Müller say that the word for friendship in the original language was "man-and-dog-in-the-desert?"

*Milverton.* What an ingenious way Ellesmere has of insinuating that he is supported by some great authority! "Does not Max Müller say?" No, he does not say anything of the kind.

*Ellesmere.* How do you know? I have no doubt it is in a note which has hitherto escaped your observation. But, at any rate, the friendship between a dog and a man is the highest form and exemplar of friendship. Does a dog ever say, or look as if he would say, "I told you so," when you are mortified to death at having committed some grievous folly? or does it use what is called "the privilege of a friend," to say the most cutting things to you?

Then look at the nice appreciation of character which dogs manifest: their tolerance of children, their boundless fidelity, their interest in all human affairs.

"Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res."

Aristippus must have been very like a dog. Dogs will go with you to a badger-bait, to a fox-hunt, to a public meeting, to races, to church, and will almost always behave themselves well and creditably, and not disgrace their masters.

*Cranmer.* The irrepressible dog at the Derby?

*Ellesmere.* If I wanted an instance to show the brutality of men and the humanity of dogs, I would rely upon the case of the dog at the Derby. He knows that his master

has backed heavily Vauban, or Hermit, or Lord Lyon, and, of course, he has a deep and affectionate interest in the race for his master's sake. And then the poor creature is malignantly shouted at all along the racecourse ; and when he perceives, with the tact of a dog, that he is doing something wrong, and wishes to escape to the right or the left, no good Christians make way for him.

By the way, talking of Christians, I admit that dogs are not good Christians : they are too prejudiced for that, and too much inclined to persecute the inferior animals ; but then how few men are Christians ! In short, you cannot say anything against dogs which does not apply with equal force to human beings ; while, on the other hand, how many things may be said against human beings, which do not apply to dogs ? If Rochefoucauld had passed his time with dogs instead of with courtiers, would he ever have said " that there is something in the misfortunes of our friends which is not entirely displeasing to us ? " I ask you, did you ever know a dog bark out any maxim like that ? No ; down with men, and up with dogs, say I.

If the Pythagorean system is true, it will only be the very good and choice men who will become dogs in the next stage of existence. Come here, Fairy : I have no doubt you were an exemplary woman ; that you never scandalized any other woman at tea-time ; that you did not thwart your husband seriously more than twice a day ; that you did not worry him to sign cheques ; and that you did not say he was a brute if he declined to go out shopping with you. Yes, turn up the whites of your eyes, my dear, to show how horrified you are to think that there are women not quite so good as you were. But you were a wonder of a woman, as you are now a wonder of a dog. I will not have dogs run

down : I am their champion. What does the excellent Dr. Watts say, somewhat ironically?—

“If dogs delight to bark and bite,  
We make a great to-do ;  
If men show fight, and women spite,  
Why, 'tis their nature to.”

Any excuse for ourselves ; none for the poor dogs.

*Milverton.* Poor Dr. Watts ! What would he say to hearing his good words so parodied ?

*Sir Arthur.* Notwithstanding Ellesmere's eulogium upon dogs, I venture to say again, what I said before, that I do not like their barking. But, to pursue the general question of noise, we never hardly, in our houses, make any sensible provision against it.

*Milverton.* Very true, Sir Arthur. I remember reading of some murder committed in a Russian palace,—a noisy murder, too—but nobody heard anything of it in the next room. Now that is my idea of how a house should be built. It should be possible to commit a murder in any room, without the rest of the house being troubled or disturbed. As it is, architects seem to have set their faces against all quiet and privacy. Studios men are the victims of neighbouring pianos. A nursery is a hot-bed of annoyance. I have studied the question of noise very deeply, and I will tell you something of the greatest importance. Put a layer of small shells between the flooring that separates a room from the room above it. You will find these shells admirable non-conductors of sound.

*Cranmer.* I wish architects were subject to examinations.

*Milverton.* Very good. The first question I should ask them would be, What thickness of what material will pre-

vent such and such noises—say the playing of a piano by a beginner—from being heard in the adjacent rooms?

*Sir Arthur.* I remember when I was in Germany, and used to spell over the German newspapers, nothing used to delight me more than the advertisements of servants, which so often began, "*Ein stilles Mädchen.*" Now, if one could advertise about houses, and say truthfully, "*Ein stilles Haus*" (I'm sure I do not know whether that is the right German), what an attractive advertisement it would be!

*Ellesmere.* You were quoting just now "Never Too Late to Mend." I don't think Mr. Reade protested so much against solitary confinement as against the cruelty which in that particular case accompanied solitary confinement. At least such is my recollection of that eloquent and fervid book.

*Milverton.* No, you are wrong; he protested against the system as well as against the cruelties which he stated to have accompanied it in that particular case.

It is a commonplace remark to make, but what an atrocious thing cruelty is! Do not you all feel that circumstances favouring you might have committed all other sins known in the calendar of sinfulness? but cruelty is unspeakably abhorrent to all thoughtful men. There is nothing Christianity has set its face so distinctly against.

*Ellesmere.* But then, you see, there are so few Christians in the world. At least such is the conclusion I have come to, from my limited experience. There is something in my mind upon this subject which would, I fear, perfectly horrify you all. It is a strange, almost ridiculous resemblance that has often struck me between Christianity and something which is considered to be one of the most frivolous of all the frivolous things in this world.

I would not have said it before dear Dunsford for the world, and I am afraid to say it even to you.

*Cranmer.* Let us hear it. We are not bound to agree with it, and I am certain beforehand I shall disagree with it.

*Sir Arthur.* Do not all at once be modest and timid, Sir John. If you are suddenly taken in this way, we shall all think you are going to have an illness.

*Lady Ellesmere.* Pray do not imagine such a thing. I did not half describe to you, when we talked upon the subject of illness the other day, what an irrational person he is. He had the audacity to complain of me. But, indeed, the great superiority of women to men is never more conspicuous than in illness. Men oscillate from utter abjectness to obstinate indocility.

One day it is, "Oh, pray manage for me, and pray manage me. I have no will of my own; I am nobody, only a bundle of pain and misery."

The next day my lord is a little better, and has resumed his usual grandeur and obstinacy. If you bring him some beef-tea or some water-gruel, he insists upon your explaining to him (at least Sir John does) the exact nature and effect of those harmless fluids. He once reasoned with me for three-quarters of an hour about a mustard-plaster; and, indeed, he made a speech about it (at a time when he was ordered not to talk at all) which would have done him great credit before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. He divided his speech into seven heads, and it ended by showing that a mustard-plaster was one of the most dangerous remedies that could be applied; but I did apply it nevertheless. I say again, that the superiority of a woman to a man is never more manifest than in a sick-room, whether as nurse or patient—in the one case showing a skilfulness and tender-



ness ; in the other, a patience and endurance utterly unknown to what is facetiously called the stronger-minded sex.

*Ellesmere.* Doesn't she talk like a book?—like a bit of the *Rambler* or *Spectator*? “Showing in the one case a clumsiness and hardness, and, in the other, an impatience and irritability, which are quite unknown to the wiser and the gentler sex, that is, to the sex masculine.” I think those were her words, or, at least, such as they ought to have been.

*Sir Arthur.* I thought that what Lady Ellesmere said was equally true and well-expressed.

*Ellesmere.* The poor husband, or father, or brother, is always at a sad disadvantage in dealing with his womankind. He brings, with trembling and reluctant hand, the invigorating but distasteful acid of the medicinal potion, while the polite stranger assiduously presents the fallacious palliative of the consequential saccharinity.

At least, that is how Dr. Johnson and Lady Ellesmere would express it. Plain John (that is how some people describe me, as they used to describe a former Lord Chancellor), plain John has to administer the dose, and the polite Sir Arthur gives the sugar or the jam which weak people take after their doses.

*Milverton.* This is a very pleasant and instructive interlude ; but you were going to say something which would horrify us. I join with Mauleverer, and maintain that it is beyond your power to horrify me.

*Ellesmere.* Here goes, as you will have it. Is there anything that Christianity protests against so much as riches and the belief in riches? Or, to put the question more largely, Is there anything that Christianity protests against so much as a slavish yielding to worldly greatness of any

kind—to great riches, great power, great intellect, great force, or great worldly success of any kind?

*Milverton.* Yes; you are right.

*Sir Arthur.* Yes.

*Ellesmere.* Well, then, *Fashion is the only thing which, in modern times, has stood up boldly against wealth, power, rank, dignity, and success of all kinds.* I am not old enough to remember when Fashion was predominant, but I heard older men talk about it, and I learned to estimate its power. There was a time when it was the fashion to be poor. Think of that. It is very like Christianity, you know.

*Sir Arthur.* This is the most paradoxical thing I ever heard, and yet there really is something in it. *Fashion* did make a sort of protest against riches, rank, and adventitious worth of all kinds. But, my dear Sir John, the idol it set up instead was a miserable one.

*Ellesmere.* I do not care about that; it somehow appealed to what was considered to be personal worth rather than adventitious circumstances. Men were fashionable who did not possess any of the things that the world generally dotes upon.

*Milverton.* What you say, Ellesmere, is very ingenious; and I must honestly say I sympathise with anything that thwarts, or tends to thwart, the brute power of wealth.

How many a man may say, as some Don Alonso, or Don Juan, says in one of Calderon's plays—

“Y el haber, en mí, ó no haber,  
O temor ó atrevimiento,  
No consiste en otra cosa  
Que haber ó no haber dinero;”

which being liberally translated, means, “If I have cash, I have courage; but if I am poor, I have none.”

*Ellesmere.* You see neither Sir Arthur nor Milverton have much to say against my theory. I am not such a fool and scoundrel after all, Mr. Cranmer, am I?

*Cranmer.* Nobody thought that you were, Sir John; but, for my part, I must say I prefer a great contractor to Beau Brummel.

*Ellesmere.* I do not.

*Sir Arthur.* The best protest I ever knew made against worldly success was by a small society of young men at college. Their numbers were very few, and their mode of election was the most remarkable I have ever known. The vacancies were exceedingly rare—perhaps one or two in the course of a year—and the utmost care and study were bestowed on choosing the new members. Sometimes, months were given to the consideration of a man's claim.

Rank neither told for a man, nor against him. The same with riches, the same with learning, and what is more strange, the same with intellectual gifts of all kinds. The same, too, with goodness; nor even were the qualities that make a man agreeable any sure recommendation of him as a candidate.

*Mauleverer.* What did you go by then?

*Sir Arthur.* I really feel a difficulty in describing to you, and yet I know perfectly what it was.

A man to succeed with us must be a real man, and not a "sham," as Carlyle would say. Matthew Arnold has invented a word to describe certain people, which is not a bad one. He calls them "Philistines." Now our man was never a "Philistine." He was not to talk the talk of any clique; he was not to believe too much in any of his adventitious advantages; neither was he to disbelieve in them—for instance, to affect to be a radical because he was a lord.

I confess I have no one word which will convey all that I mean ; but I may tell you that, above all things, he was to be open-minded. When we voted for a man, we generally summed up by saying, "He has an apostolic spirit in him," and by that we really meant a great deal.

I remember —, who is now a very great personage in the world, saying to me, "In the course of one's chequered life one meets with many disgraces and contumelies, and also with several honours ; but no honour ever affected me so much as being elected, as a youth, into that select body. And, to speak very frankly, I think they were right in choosing me, for, with many demerits of the gravest kind, I do think I am a real human being, and I say what I think, and I try to think for myself, and the world's gauds and vanities do not, I conceive, excessively impose upon me."

By the way, I must tell you a curious thing—viz. that the choice made by these young men, though made without any view to future worldly pre-eminence, yet seemed to involve it, for a very large proportion of the men so selected have made their mark in the world ; and some of the foremost men of the time belonged to that society. But boys at school and youths at college do choose so wisely and so well, as Milverton has told us. They are not to be deceived by wrappages of any kind.

*Milverton.* But we wander from our subject. Ellesmere said that there were few Christians anywhere. If he means that there are few perfect Christians, every one would agree with him. But if he means that Christianity has not prevailed, is not prevailing, and will not prevail in a much higher degree, I humbly think he is mistaken. The truth is, so large a conquest has already been made by Christianity in the human mind, that each individual Christian

looks smaller, and is of course of far less account, than when he was surrounded by a Pagan world. "*Non meus hic sermo.*" These are not my words, but Dunsford's—almost his last words to me.

Dunsford was our tutor, Ellesmere's and mine, at college. He lived near us here, and was much with us.

*Ellesmere.* I never asked, Milverton, what he died of. As you know, I was abroad at the time.

*Milverton.* Of simple exhaustion. You know he was about the most learned man in England, being great in science, in classical lore, and in literature of all kinds. He kept up his learning, was a most diligent student to the last, and withal a most active clergyman in a large and scattered parish. He burned the candle at both ends, rising early and going to bed late.

*Lady Ellesmere.* He had no wife. Wives are of some use, if only to prevent their husbands from overworking.

*Milverton.* Well, a day or too before his death, he cleared the room of his attendants, and told me he wished to speak to me. He began by talking of the critical spirit of the present age, and how the historical part of Christianity would have to undergo a severe ordeal. He spoke of some of the great heresiarchs of the present day, both of those who were eminent in Biblical criticism and in science, and he spoke of them with the greatest kindness, saying that many of them were good men who loved the truth, and that no permanent harm could come to religion from a sincere search after truth.

"I do not wish," he said, "my dear boy" (he always looked upon Ellesmere and myself as his children)—

*Ellesmere.* Yes; Dunsford was one of those persons who think you never grow any older, and always treated

Milverton and me as boys, because we had been his pupils. I remember once, after he had been lecturing me in a very pedagogic way about some heresy which I had presumed to utter anent the classics (I dare say about the manufacture of Latin verses), I let the conversation drop, and then a few minutes afterwards, in the most demure way (I was staying at his house), I asked whether one of the maids could be spared to take me out for a little walk. The good man laughed heartily, and did not attempt to tutorize me for the next three days. It is true it was some years ago, but I had "taken silk" (as we say at the Bar), and did not by any means think myself a small or insignificant personage. As we grow older we grow more modest : at least I do every day.

But go on, Milverton, with what dear Dunsford said to you.

*Milverton.* "I do not wish," he said, "to prevent such people as you and Ellesmere (he named you, John) from reading all this criticism, and accepting any of it that seems to you good ; but let no man rob you of the main truths of Christianity : let no one blind you to what there is essentially divine in our religion.

"I may be an enthusiast, but I think that the triumphs of Christianity are but commencing. I look forward to a time when war, which so distresses you now, Milverton, will be an obsolete thing ; when the pity we have at present for the woes and miseries of other men, will seem, comparatively speaking, but hardness of heart ; when the grief of any one will be largely partaken by all those who know of it, and when our souls will not be isolated ; when good men will allow themselves to give full way to their benevolent impulses, because no unfair advantage will be taken of their benevolence ; when the weak will not traffic upon their

weakness, nor the strong abuse their strength ; when wealth will not be ardently sought for, except by those who feel that they can undertake the heavy burden of dispensing wealth for the good of their brethren ; when men and women will be able to live together in a household without mean dissensions ; when the lower seats shall be preferred ; when men will differ about nice points of doctrine without adjudging to their opponents eternal condemnation ; when, in short, instead of a tumult of discord ascending to heaven from this bewildered world, there shall go up one harmonious melody, breathing peace and faith, and love and concord and contentment."

*Mauleverer* (aside to me). And when every fir-tree in the wood shall be a Christmas-tree bearing pretty toys and delicious sweetmeats.

*Ellesmere*. "*Jam redeunt Saturnia regna.*" There will be no room for the like of me in this good world that the excellent Dunsford contemplated, but I shall only be too delighted to behold it, whether from near or from afar ; and certain it is, that if we do not believe and hope for better things, we shall never try to make things better.

*Milverton*. And then he added something which impressed me very much, for he was not a man of a romantic turn of mind, or given to daring speculations.

"Moreover," he said, "I fondly believe that physical nature will then become less obdurate—that is, if men are fitted to receive a softer, gentler state of being. Now, as it is, if Nature were more easy and more bountiful, men would only have more spare time for annoying and persecuting one another ; but depend upon it, if we were more fitted to receive good things from our Father, we should receive them.

“ Think of these sayings of mine when I have gone, my dear, and let no one persuade you that Christianity is the mere dream of a few benighted enthusiasts. I can say no more. Good night ;—and perhaps it is good night for ever.”

It was not so, for I saw him die ; and it is a sight that is not without consolation to see a good man die.

No one seemed inclined to comment upon these last words of the good Dunsford. Mr. Milverton soon got up and walked about the room. The others looked at one another with a curious expression of countenance, half sad, half hopeful. Mr. Mauleverer shrugged up his shoulders, and Ellesmere replied to him by a similar gesture (it was not a mocking gesture, but one of sadness), but neither of them said anything.

## The Story of Realmah.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

#### REALMAH'S DANGER FROM CONSPIRACIES.

PERSONAL enemies are very rare. Taking the population of the world at one thousand millions, it is true that there are at least one thousand millions of personal enemies ; but then, as we must consider each man as his own chief personal enemy, this calculation will not prove much.



of these secret ways), he had unobserved access to the tomb. One side of the house was built against a rocky and wooded eminence, and he had caused a secret aperture to be constructed from that side into this elevated ground.

It may appear inconsistent to say that Realmah was a very fearless man, while mentioning that he took such precautions as the above. But this was eminently characteristic of him: that he should foresee danger; provide, in some measure, against it; and then not trouble himself any further about the matter.

It is a wonder that he was not more anxious about his life; for the conspirators had already tried what poison could do, and their plot had only been defeated by Realmah's fine sense of taste, which had detected something wrong in some beverage that had been handed to him. Careful inquiries had been made about this; but the guilt had not been brought home to any one, and Realmah affected to believe that it was an accident. Omki, however, took care to make great change in the King's immediate attendants.

One morning in the spring-time, very early, a man in the dress of a fisherman might have been seen issuing from an obscure postern of the palace, and making his way rapidly, though with somewhat of a limping gait, to the Bridge of Foxes, as it was called, which led to the wood of the royal domain. He did not turn to look about him. Had there been an

observant person present, that person would have seen a small body of men emerge from some spot near the palace, and disperse themselves in twos and threes, taking nearly the same route as the fisherman. In half an hour afterwards, a similar body might have been seen issuing from the same postern of the palace from which the fisherman had come. The first body were the emissaries of the conspirators: the second were the faithful guard led by Omki. This was not the first time that the fisherman had been followed in this manner; but it was the first time that the conspirators had received much earlier notice than Omki of the fisherman's intention to take an early walk. It need hardly be said that the fisherman was the King.

It is a fortunate thing for the world that conspiracies are almost always ill-managed. In this instance, nothing would seem simpler than that one or two of the foremost of the conspirators should have gained upon Realmah, and have murdered him before he reached the house. But they did nothing of the kind. It had been agreed that they should meet together near the house, force their way into it, and attack him there. And they kept to their agreement. Probably not one of them really liked the work, and therefore they were all averse to acting, except together in numbers.

Realmah gained the house; and, after speaking a few kind words to the steward's wife, descended into the secret passage that led to the tomb of the Ainah,

which was covered in on all sides, and into which, except by this passage, there was no access.

Now this poor woman had been solemnly warned by Omki of the danger that the King incurred during these visits to the tomb; and no sooner had she attended Realmah to the secret passage which led to the tomb, than she went up to the highest room in the house and kept watch. There, to her amazement and dismay, she saw assembling, by twos and threes, no fewer than seventeen men under the shelter of a large "quilpahra," a tree like a beech-tree, but with a larger leaf. She hastened down to the King to give him notice. Realmah instantly appreciated the danger; and, leaving the tomb, betook himself to the place of concealment in the rock, which was entered by an opening from the vestibule of the house, at a height of about ten feet from the ground. It was reached by means of a rope-ladder. It led into a long passage, which had an exit in the wood. The King made at once for this exit; but, hearing voices near, did not venture to take this way into the wood. The truth was, that the conspirators had discovered that there was some such means of exit; but had not ascertained its exact situation, as it had been very artfully contrived. Their first care, however, had been to place a small party at that spot near which they had once or twice seen the King emerge.

He had not long taken refuge in this concealed passage, when the conspirators came to the door of

the cottage, and demanded entrance. The woman made no reply. The conspirators began to force the door, which had been made very strong. Moreover, there were two iron bars which could be drawn across it, and which went into staples fixed in the adjacent walls. The careful Omki had provided these means of defence, and had instructed the steward's wife how to make ready use of them. Seven or eight minutes were lost by the conspirators in forcing this door: at last they made good their entrance. They then seized hold of the poor woman, and by frightful threats compelled her to disclose to them the secret entrance to the tomb. They descended into the vault, where of course they did not find the King; but one of them, groping about on the floor, picked up a shell brooch of exquisite workmanship, which they were sure could only have belonged to a person of high rank. After a fruitless search, they returned to the vestibule. They then searched all through the house, but without effect. One cruel man then proposed to put the poor woman to the torture. This plan was immediately adopted. A cord was twisted round her forehead, and pulled violently by the men at each end of it. Her agonizing screams rent the air, but no word of betrayal came from the poor woman. Realmah could bear it no longer. He drew aside the rough screen of wood-work that concealed him; and, standing like a saint in a niche, addressed the conspirators. "I am here: who is it that wishes to kill his king? If any one,

let him do so." Most of the conspirators stood staring at him. One or two, more hardened than the rest, hurled missiles at him, one of which struck the King on the breast, and made him fall backwards into the recess. They were looking about for the means of ascending, when Omki and his followers, who had pressed upon their steps, rushed into the house. The fight was furious; but Omki's party prevailed. Six of the conspirators were left dead on the floor, and the others were overpowered and bound. His faithful foster-brother then ascended to Realmah's aid. The King was still senseless. But, though considerably injured, he was not fatally wounded, and after a short time he recovered his senses. His first orders were to spare the conspirators, and to bring them before him. He reasoned with these guilty men, and, upon a promise of clemency, obtained from them a full account of the plot and of the chief movers in it. He then ordered their bonds to be loosed, and was carried home in the arms of his faithful followers.

Such a transaction could not be kept secret, and in a few hours it was noised all through the city. Realmah's clemency was to no purpose. While the King was in a deep sleep, for the physicians of that nation understood the use of opiates, the populace rose in fury, and sacked the houses of the principal conspirators, killing those who had not made their escape.

There was no further attempt upon the life of

Realmah ; for those who might still wish to conspire against him felt that, even if they were to succeed in their conspiracy, they would have to endure the rage of an infuriated populace.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

##### REALMAH'S GREAT ENEMY, BRISHEE-BRASHEE-VAH.

IN our moral likings and dislikings there are as many odd fancies and peculiarities as in our physical likings ; and we all know in physical matters how peculiar these likings are. One man is attracted by black hair in his beloved, another by auburn, another by red. The countenance which is absolutely repulsive to one, is fearfully attractive to another. There are even some people to whom obliquity of vision on the part of their beloved is delightful.

But it has often passed unobserved that there are the same invincible likings and dislikings as regards the moral qualities. One man can endure anything but cruelty in those he loves. Another has a positive hatred for the puritanical virtues.<sup>1</sup> A third, and such

<sup>1</sup> "I have known distinguished fathers and mothers in our Christian Israel, whose presence was like mildew upon flowers, and who sent you away with the feeling of having been defrauded of half your vital electricity." The writer of the above, an American named Henry James, would not be likely to admire much even the virtues of Puritanism.

a man was Hamlet, adores justice, and cannot bear the unjust and passionate man :

" Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee, Horatio ;"

while again there are others who are very tolerant of passion and injustice, but cannot abide small, narrow-minded equitable priggishness.

Now Realmah, great as he was, was not exempt from these prejudices in his moral likings and dislikings. You might oppose him in council, and he would like you just the same. You might say injurious things against him, and he would forgive you, merely observing that he was sorry that you did not understand him. You might even conspire against him, and he would readily pardon you, as we have seen. But he was unspeakably bitter against the men who promoted false rumours. He was wont to say that these false rumours are the great difficulty of government, and that all the skill in the world cannot quite meet and dissipate them. Here it may be remarked how very difficult it must have been before printing had been invented for a government to check these false rumours. Much of what we now call history consists perhaps of the lightest, falsest, and most unauthorized sayings of the most gossiping of mankind.

Realmah would lose all his usual calmness and dignity when inveighing against the men who made

and propagated false rumours. Indeed he was in the habit of saying that *Brishee-Brashee-Vah*, which meant in their language *The Lord of False Gabbling*, was the only enemy he never had conquered, and could never hope to conquer.

Of the rumours that made Realmah so angry, some were of this kind.—The Varnah, who delighted in household arrangement, and who seldom went out of doors, was ill. The court physician recommended that Her Loftiness should take more air. Realmah, entering her apartments one day, remarked before her and her women—"We must take the open air a great deal this summer, my Varnah; that is the way to meet your enemy. He is not to be battled with in the house."

That simple speech led to a report, which was believed throughout Abibah, that the King would take the field at the head of thirty thousand men for a summer campaign against the Bibraskas; and absolutely, ambassadors arrived from the Bibraskas to propitiate the wrath of so great a monarch.

Realmah, when he addressed the Varnah, had pointed to an opening in the wall which looked towards the east, and the Bibraskas were the only tribe in that direction who did not admit the suzerainty of Realmah.

The King strove to trace the origin and growth of this report; and, finding that one of the Varnah's women had repeated his words, with sundry additions, to her lover, was with difficulty persuaded from



ordering her to be strangled. The great and good-natured King was never known to have been so fierce as upon this occasion, nor to inveigh so loudly against Brishee-Brashee-Vah, whom he believed to be the chief god of evil in this lower world.

Corresponding with his hatred of Brishee-Brashee-Vah was Realmah's love for true intelligence. No man, to use an expression of Talleyrand's, was more "avid of facts." He did not care for the facts being apparently important : if they were trivial, but true, he valued them. He desired to know who in Abibah loved whom, who hated whom, who was about to marry whom. He did not despise gossip, if gossip were but based upon facts.

The Varnah and Talora, with the tact of women, discovered this, and, when they wanted him to do anything in household matters, took care to please him first by giving him intelligence that he could rely upon.

His foster-brother, Omki, vexed him much by bringing him rumours and suspicions of all kinds ; but there was a great affection between Realmah and Omki, and the King endured from his foster-brother what he would not have borne from any other man.

If Realmah was desirous to know the truth about all manner of minor matters, it may be imagined how anxious he was to have sound intelligence about serious things connected with his government, and, above all, to have exact accounts of the movements of the men of the North.

For this purpose he posted men, upon whose vigilance and judgment he could thoroughly rely, at all the passes of that part of the country which is now called the Vorarlberg.

The instructions he gave to these men were very characteristic of him. He said, "Do not bring me your suspicions ; do not bring me even your thoughts ; do not worry me with rumours : I will only act upon ascertained facts.

"You all know the story of Kalvi the Timid, who lived in the woods. It was always 'Wolves, wolves !' with poor Kalvi. Even his wives ceased to be frightened by him. At last, the wolves did come ; and what said the wives ? 'Those are not the howlings of real wolves ; but the boys, poor Kalvi, are playing their wicked jokes upon you, as usual ; and we will not shut the door.'

"My people must not liken me to Kalvi the Timid. Do not bring me anything in the way of intelligence that you have not seen with your own eyes. There is always time enough. For once that we unwisely delay to act, we act prematurely one hundred times. Be wise ; and do not disturb your king until the real moment for action comes."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE INVASION.

SEVEN years had now passed since Realmah's accession to the throne ; and, in the course of that time, his power had immensely increased. Three objects had chiefly occupied his attention : the manufacture of iron, the gaining of allies, and the consolidation of his sway over distant provinces that had hitherto owned but a dubious allegiance to the Sheviri. In all of these objects he had been eminently successful ; and it is not too much to say that the kingdom he ruled over was ten times as strong as it had been when the burden of government first devolved upon him.

He had urged on, with all the power of government, the new manufacture of iron. He had formed many firm alliances—as firm, at least, as alliances ever are. After paying attention, in the first instance, to the arming and disciplining of his own troops, he had bestowed similar care upon those of his allies, and had not hesitated to furnish the choice bands of those allies, upon whom he could most rely, with weapons which had been made in his own forges.

There was great murmuring amongst his people upon this point. What a large mind it takes to be

profoundly generous! and nations are mostly less generous even than individual men. But few cared to speak out openly against anything that Realmah had set his heart upon; for was he not Realmah-Lelaipah-Mu—Realmah the Foreseeing Youth? And almost all his subjects acknowledged that it was not once, or twice, or thrice, that this man, their King, had been right, and those who opposed him wrong; but that his words had uniformly proved to be the words of prudence and of wisdom. Even Condore, who was now an old man, joining the peevishness of age to the confirmed habit of prophesying evil, ceased to have any weight with his fellow-countrymen, though he did not cease on every occasion to foretell that no good would come of whatever was proposed. For had he not once prophesied that good would come; and, being mistaken, did he not take care never again to prophesy a good result? Realmah was wont to say to his courtiers, with a smile, "Poor old Condore has been with us to-day, and has told us, in words which once or twice before I have heard from him, that what my government proposes will not succeed. We needed but this confirmation to act upon our resolve; for has the good Condore ever prophesied that it will thunder on the left hand, that it has not impertinently thundered on the right?" This was not true, for Condore had often been right in his forebodings; but this was the way in which Realmah chose to put it.

Meanwhile, what had the men of the North been  
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doing? It is not known to us; but we may conjecture that disputes amongst themselves had exhausted for a time their warlike energies, and diverted their attention from the conquest of the South. Whatever was the cause, it is certain that the dreaded invasion from the North had not occurred during these seven years. The prudent mind of Realmah had not, however, been the less solicitous on that account. He had never doubted that this invasion would come in his time; and not a day had passed in which he had not done something in the way of preparation to encounter it.

Realmah was much given to a splendid hospitality. This hospitality was caused not only by his liberal nature, but also by that spirit of melancholy which ever encompassed him. It is often supposed that the most melancholy among the sons of men retire into privacy to indulge that melancholy; but, on the other hand, it may frequently be observed, especially if they are in a great public position, that they surround themselves with a multitude, in order to chase away the dark thoughts of their own souls. Thus it was with Cortes; thus it was with Wallenstein, and with many others who have played a great part in the world's affairs.

It was one day, early in the spring of the eighth year of his reign, that Realmah sat at the head of his royal table, surrounded by many of his best friends and most trusted councillors. The King's jester sat at his left hand, and rejoiced to see that every now

and then his ready jests provoked a faint kind of smile from the weary monarch.

The feast was not concluded when, from the further part of the hall, there arose an unaccustomed murmur, and then a sudden silence. The crowd opened, and there advanced towards Realmah a man, not clad in festal robes, but dusty, toil-worn, travel-stained. He approached the King hastily, and whispered in his ear the ominous words: "They have come. Through the Pass of Koraun they are pouring into the Vale of Avildama by countless thousands."

He had hardly given his report when another messenger in like guise entered the great hall, and, rushing through the crowd, approached the King, breathing into his ear similar intelligence,—with this addition, that the enemy were accompanied by women and children, flocks and herds; and that the whole host did not appear to be less than 250,000 souls.

Realmah rose from his seat with alacrity, and, with a loud voice and a most cheerful countenance, announced the news to the assembled guests and servitors.

"This is a day," he said, "that will ever be memorable in our annals. For years we have been awaiting in anxiety this attack; and, now that it has come, I feel all the relief that there must ever be when suspense is turned into certainty. After the defeat of these hordes (and of that defeat I am well assured), such peace and joy as we have never known—at least, such as I have never known—will be ours for

the glad future. But now to Council ; and, meanwhile, do all of you spread the joyful tidings throughout the city."

Thus, like a great commander and politic statesman, did Realmah simulate a joy he was far from feeling, and throw forth a light of hope which was but dimly reflected in the sombre recesses of his own mind.

To both of the messengers he gave what he knew would be considered great largesse, thanking them publicly for their vigilance, and bidding them spread the good news throughout the city. Drawing his sword, he presented that to the first messenger ; and to the second he gave his own goblet, ornamented with amber.<sup>1</sup>

The feast was broken up, and the Council met at once. The first thought of Realmah, on hearing this disastrous news, had been a determination to get rid of the greater part of his Council, and to conduct the war in the plenitude of despotic authority.

When, therefore, he met the Council, he did not allow the councillors to speak, but gave out his own views as if they were not for a moment to be gainsaid, or even questioned.

He then told them frankly that they would at first be beaten at all points ; and that the only question was, to exhaust the enemy's forces by the sacrifice of

<sup>1</sup> It has surprised antiquaries to find that the inhabitants of the Lake cities possessed amber ; and it has been conjectured that this amber came by trade of some kind with the Baltic.

greater numbers on their own side. He explained to them that that was his policy. He was not for doing anything ungenerous; but the fate of the South hung upon what he was doing. They must not, therefore, scruple to shed the blood of their tributaries and their allies, as they would their own. The war would have a successful issue if they could sacrifice a hundred of their own lives, or of the lives of their tributaries and allies, for every thirty of the enemy.

He gave special missions to almost all the members of the Council, retaining only three with him. These three were Delaimah-Daree, the man of many resources; Londardo, the man of unlimited daring; and Llama-Mah, Realmah's flatterer and dependant. The King felt nearly sure that he should have his own way in this diminished Council; and secretly resolved, if he were in the least degree thwarted by them, to dismiss them also upon foreign service, and to take the command alone.

Before concluding the business of the Council, he gave general orders for an illumination of the town of Abibah, such as that which was held in the eighth month of the year, in honour of Rotondarah, the god of thunder and of storms.

He also ordered those councillors who were to proceed upon missions to various parts of the kingdom, and to the territories of their allies, to signalize their arrival by similar illuminations in the various towns to which they were ordered to proceed.



After the Council had broken up, he went to his own house, which, from motives of policy, he had always retained, and where he often resided—to show that he did not personally care for grandeur—and, walking up and down the balcony for hours, he revolved the whole conduct of the war.

Ah me! how different are the thoughts of men in this perplexed world from what those thoughts would be if men were left to themselves, and were not perpetually molested by their fellow-men! Here was Realmah, who loved the life of every living creature, who would stoop to save the life of an insect which had become embarrassed in running water; and yet his sole thought that moonlight night, as he paced up and down the balcony, was how he could most advantageously sacrifice the lives of his subjects so as to insure the greatest destruction in the ranks of the enemy.

“Were I resolved to die,” he said to himself, “poor creature as I am in battle, they could not kill me without my having at least slain one of the enemy. I will give a great banquet to-morrow, to the tribe of the fishermen and the ironworkers, and upon them I will impress the idea that no man must perish without having slain one at least of these accursed Northmen.”

With this consolatory idea, the great King at last sought the repose that was so much needed for him.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## REALMAH'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE. HIS PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN.

REALMAH lost no time in making his preparations for resisting the siege of Abibah. He felt sure that the Northern tribes would ask who was the greatest king in those parts, and would direct their energies, in the first instance, to the reduction of his power.

What he most feared was fire ; and his first efforts were directed to meet that danger. All those parts of the town which lay near the drawbridges he protected with thin plates of iron. The neighbouring parts to them he covered with a coating of clay and small stones ; and the more remote parts of the town with the hides of animals.

Fortunately, the supply of water was inexhaustible ; but the provisioning of the town for a protracted siege was a matter of anxious thought for Realmah.

As amongst the ancient Peruvians, so amongst the Sheviri, their laws and customs provided for considerable public storages of corn to meet the claims of the widows, the orphans, and the sick. And, as it was spring-time, there was nothing further to be done in the storing of grain.

Much, however, might be accomplished by slaughtering the principal part of their flocks and herds,

and drying the flesh in the sun. This was done ; and, after great exertions, Realmah found himself in a position to endure a siege of three months, without being in the least degree liable to suffer from famine. He was enabled to persuade his people to consent to the sacrifice of the best of their flocks and herds, by showing them that when the enemy came to invest the city they must be masters of the plains and the woodlands near, and the only question would be whether the Sheviri, or the enemy, should feed upon their flocks and herds.

The people were thoroughly docile to their king ; and, on this memorable occasion, all private interests were merged in a great effort to meet, and if possible to defeat, the public enemy.

The name of the king who led the Northern forces was Lockmar ; and the epithet that well described him was Dansta - Ramah — " the All-destroying Flame." Like Attila, or Genghis-Khan, or any of the fearful scourges who have devastated the fairest regions of the earth, he was simply a brute kind of a man, who loved carnage, and had gained the superiority amongst his fellows by being, if possible, a lower and more ferocious animal than any of them. Remorseless as a tiger, subtle as a serpent, and brave as a lion, Lockmar had all the sway which belongs to a supreme pre-eminence in badness.

Against this man the gentle, kind-hearted Realmah was pitted ; and it remained to be seen whether

brute force was always to be predominant in this world.

The plan of the campaign, as it had long been matured in the mind of Realmah, was very simple. There were to be three armies in the field. The Phelatahs and the Doolmen were to form the bulk of one of these armies. The subject provinces were to furnish a second army; and the third, upon which Realmah placed the greatest reliance, was to consist of Sheviri, and to operate in the plain south of the city, through which the great river Ramassa runs.

A small body of the troops of the Sheviri was to be attached to the first and second armies. The brunt of the war was to be borne by the army of the Ramassa, as it was called. This army was to be commanded by Athlah.

The relations between that chieftain and Realmah had been greatly changed since the beginning of this story. Athlah was a man who always believed in power, and was very submissive to it. Besides, he had learnt to appreciate fully the great qualities of the King; and on no one's could Realmah have placed a firmer reliance than he did on that of Athlah.

Realmah resolved to remain in the town of Abibah, for he had many devices in his mind to prepare it for a state of siege, and he was determined to fight the invaders street by street, and not to yield as long as a single vestige of the town remained upon the waters.

He intended to be present at the battle in the plain, but he had resolved to come away from it alive, and to reserve all his energies for the siege. He did not hesitate to let this intention be known to his principal friends and councillors. He felt that the knowledge of this intention (which was sure to leak out) would give great comfort to the inhabitants of the town, and induce them to bear without murmuring the great labours and sacrifices which he was about to impose upon them for the defence of the town.

He had in his own mind come to the conclusion that each one of these three armies would be worsted, but not without inflicting considerable loss upon the enemy; that they would then commence a siege; that this siege would be very impetuously maintained for a short time; that it would then languish; that he could direct a guerilla warfare against the southern divisions of the enemy's army; and, in fine, that he could protract matters until the rainy season should come on. By that time, he would have collected the scattered remnants of these three armies, and would make a final grand attack.

The reasons which had led Realmah to form and and to rely upon this plan of campaign were these:—Though he had armed his own troops and some of his allies with iron weapons, he was well aware that every man of the Northern tribes would be well armed. He was also aware that they had much more practice in war than the nations of the South. He, therefore, concluded that his people and his allies

would inevitably be beaten in pitched battles until he had called in pestilence and famine to his aid. He also concluded that if he could withstand the first great attack upon the town, these Northern barbarians, who, he had heard, were very capricious and unstable beings, accustomed to rapid victories, would become tired of a protracted siege. They would then either retire, or be defeated upon his striking a great blow, in concert with his allies, upon the forces of the enemy diminished and disheartened by pestilence and famine.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

ACCOUNT OF THE CAMPAIGN—THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN REALMAH  
AND ATHLAH—THE BATTLE OF THE PLAIN.

THE early events of the campaign were such as Realmah had foreseen. It is needless to recount the battles, for there is hardly a more dull thing in the way of narration than the narrative of a battle, unless it is given in full detail, or unless it is signalized by some remarkable incident or manœuvre.

The Phelatahs and the Doolmen, who operated to the north-east of the lake, were beaten, but not ingloriously. The army that was furnished by the subject provinces was also defeated.

Just as Realmah had anticipated, the men of the North, after defeating these armies, directed their

course to Abibah. The army of the Ramassa went forth to meet them ; and from day to day a battle was imminent.

Realmah, as has been said before, resolved to be present at this battle, but not to take any active part in it. He trusted Athlah thoroughly ; was willing and ready to give him aid and advice ; but told everybody that Athlah was to be the real general, and was to have the full credit for the conduct of the war outside the town of Abibah.

Realmah had a body-guard of sixty men, each of whom was devoted to him ; and, previously to the battle, he told them what he had mentioned before to his councillors, that he had no intention whatever of dying on that field of battle, and that they must take care and bring him back to the town of Abibah unharmed. Before gunpowder was invented, it was very difficult to kill a man who had sixty devoted followers, each one of them ready to die for him.

It is a very remarkable statement to make, but it is true, that not one of Realmah's subjects dared to surmise, much less to say, that it was cowardice on his part to resolve to come away from the battle alive and unharmed. On the contrary, all felt that while Realmah was gracious enough to remain alive, and to constitute himself as a rallying point for his subjects, the great cause could not be altogether lost.

Realmah did not name any successor : he knew that it would be idle to do so, for if *he* fell, the hopes of the South would fall with him, and the Sheviri

would hereafter be the mere slaves or vassals of the North.

The interview between Realmah and Athlah on the evening before the battle of the plain was a most interesting one.

In that vast area there was but one tent—the King's. All his people knew his sickness and debility, and were delighted to provide for him that comfort and convenience which he would not ask for himself.

Athlah entered the King's tent. Realmah and Athlah had for many years acted together in affectionate concert ; but not one word had passed between them having reference to the past. The wisdom gained from experiencing the difficulties of high command had greatly improved Athlah. He had learned to know himself better, and to understand others better. He knew, for instance, that Realmah's genius was one which could rebuke and dominate his own.

After the first greeting, Athlah fell upon his knees, and, kissing the King's hand, begged pardon for his offences in past time. He said that in early days he had not known the greatness of the King.

Realmah raised him affectionately, and said, "What need of words, my Athlah? I have long known that you are the truest and most faithful of my subjects. And not subject, but friend and councillor, and of my heart, the core of heart."



*Milverton.* You see, Sir Arthur, even in that distant age men talked, unconsciously, their Shakespere.

Realmah then explained to Athlah in close detail, as he had done before in general words, the whole drift of the campaign.

"The gods," he said, "dear Athlah, do not always grant our first wishes; and time with them is long; and they are very patient. You must not rely upon gaining a victory. I have made up my mind to bear defeat. The plain to the rear of the wood, where Ramassa curves towards Bidolo-Vamah, must be the spot where, after defeat, you must collect the scattered troops of the three great armies. That spot is propitious to me.

"I have sent our good Londardo to the Phelatahs. He will bring what remains of their forces there.

"I mean to live. You are a warrior, Athlah; I am a craftsman: the resistance to the siege must be under my sole guidance; and, during many a weary night of sickness, have I revolved every incident that will probably occur in it. The siege it is that will test their power, and, I trust, consume their souls.

"The army of the Ramassa, in a few weeks, will be a great army, acting in concert with me."

Then Athlah said, "And must I survive defeat, my King?"

"Yes; if you love me, live."

Then Athlah said, "But I have never turned my back upon the enemy; all my wounds are in front."

"What is life or death to a wise man, Athlah? Even the otlocol<sup>1</sup> has the sense to fly from superior force; but he comes again.

"What is life, I say, my Athlah? On balmy days, when the breeze sighs gently, and all nature is bountiful and loving, I feel the spirit of my Ainah near me. I would but too gladly join her; but it must not be yet."

Realmah then arranged what should be his mode of communication with Athlah, when that chief should have collected all their scattered forces in the plain to the rear of the great wood.

After Realmah had instructed Athlah fully upon these details, he embraced him lovingly; and the general then took leave of his king.

Athlah was attended by a splendid body-guard, formed of the flower of the army. His conduct must have appeared strange to them. After leaving the King's tent, he walked with hesitating steps. When he had moved a little distance, he drove his spear into the ground and leaned against it, regarding the tent with a fixed look. The chiefs of the Sheviri thought that he was meditating about the battle that was imminent, and observing, with the cautious eyes of a commander, the nature of the ground. But his thoughts were of a very different complexion. The great French writer, Victor Hugo, in his description of "the last days of a condemned man," describes

<sup>1</sup> The puma, or lion.

how, while the prisoner was being tried for his life, he thought neither of his crime nor of his approaching condemnation, but regarded, with much interest, the movements to and fro of a little flower that was upon the window-sill of a window in the court, and was played with by a gentle breeze.

So it was with Athlah. The issue of a great battle depended somewhat upon his sagacity and his courage, but his mind dwelt only upon the words of Realmah about the Ainah. "So then," he said to himself, "it was that common-looking girl" (to such a man as Athlah she would naturally appear but common-looking) "who was his only love; and the beautiful Talora is as a painted picture to him!"

And the chiefs that stood around said to one another, "There is not the slightest inequality of ground of which the great Athlah will not make some use in the battle of to-morrow."

And Athlah removed his spear, and walked on moodily to his watch-fire, where he lay down to sleep with his guards around him.

The battle did take place on the morrow. The King surveyed it from a slight eminence on which he was placed. Calmly he saw his chosen legions fall before the disciplined valour of the enemy. Those who were near him might have seen some tears course down his suffering countenance. But he said nothing—not a word. And when the victory was evidently gained by the men of the North, and when

further resistance was manifestly hopeless, he allowed himself to be conveyed back to Abibah.

He had previously sent twenty of his body-guard, on whom he could thoroughly rely, to mingle with Athlah's body-guard, and, by force if needful, to convey that general (giving it out as an order from the King) to the plain behind the wood, where, as before said, the Ramassa curves westward towards the ruined mountain, Bidolo-Vamah, and where Realmah had listened to his Ainah's song when she sang—

“ My love, he loves many ;  
Though I love but one.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SIEGE.

IMMEDIATELY after Realmah's retreat into the town, the causeways were destroyed, the drawbridges pulled up, and every part of the town finally prepared for a state of siege.

Before describing this siege it is necessary to give some notion of the skill of the inhabitants of Abibah in the art of building. This is the more necessary as it is a fond idea of modern people that they are pre-eminent in that art ; overlooking the masses of falsehood, pretentiousness, and inappropriateness which deform so large a part of their greatest towns. It

would rather astonish them if they could see again ancient Mexico, Thebes, Memphis, Nineveh, Babylon, and Cusco<sup>1</sup>—the last perhaps the grandest city that has ever been built upon this earth.

The construction of these Lake cities was also most remarkable. In the remains of one of them there are this day to be seen the relics of about twenty thousand piles. Now the art of pile-driving is a most difficult one; and those who are skilled in it move from place to place where their services are wanted. But if we were to say to the inhabitants of any ordinary English town, "Build us, with all the means and appliances that are at your command, but without any aid from specially skilled workmen, a town upon water which shall have for its basis twenty thousand piles," we should find, from their difficulties and their failures, what great mechanical and workmanlike skill would be requisite for such an undertaking, and should have a just respect for the powers, the skill, and the perseverance of the men of Abibah.

Five days after the battle of the Ramassa, the

<sup>1</sup> An eye-witness says: "I measured a stone at Tiaguanaco, twenty-eight feet long, eighteen feet broad, and about six feet thick; but in the wall of the fortress of Cusco, which is constructed of masonry, there are many stones of much greater size." It appears from modern research that some of these stones were fifty feet long, twenty-two feet broad, and six feet thick. "Habia entre ellas algunas que tenian cincuenta piés de largo, veinte y dos de alto, y seis de ancho."—*Antigüedades Peruanas*, por Mariano Eduardo de Rivero y Juan Diego de Tschudi, cap. ix. p. 250.

enemy commenced the siege. They naturally commenced it at the southern part of the town, which was the part nearest to the shore. They had employed the intervening days in constructing rafts, which they did by tying together the smaller trees which they had hewn down in the great wood.

A low, long building, devoted to barracks, formed the principal defence on the southern side of the town. It was, in fact, a long semi-inclosed balcony, for the most part open at the back, but having in front only those openings which admitted of missiles being thrown from them.

Realmah's plan of defence for this building was very singular. He meant the enemy to take it, and to perish after they had taken it. The whole of the flooring was to fall into the water, and the enemy with it, immediately after they had occupied it. But what showed his skill in its construction and his knowledge of human nature, was, that he had planned that this falling-in of the flooring should take place in separate portions, separately. Between the piles there was generally a portion of the flooring that would enable thirty men to stand upon it and defend it; and each of these compartments was so constructed that, by the cutting of a single cord, it would descend into the water.

Realmah knew well that if all the men who were to defend this position knew that the flooring was suddenly, and perhaps without their knowledge, to descend into the water, they would be apprehensive

of being left with the enemy and perishing with them. He also knew that if it depended upon the occupants of any particular compartment, or rather upon their captain, at what moment the flooring of that compartment should fall in, the men defending it would fight bravely to the last. To insure and reward this bravery, he offered a reward of iron swords with amber handles, to the survivors of that band of thirty men who should make the stoutest resistance.

The enemy advanced upon their rafts to the attack with great determination, and with great confidence of success. Their advance was covered by 3,000 archers, who occupied a small eminence just above the shore, and whose missiles dealt death to many a brave defender who but for a moment exposed himself to their deadly shafts. The besieged on their part were not inactive. Many of the attacking party fell by their iron-pointed javelins; many more were disabled by the boiling pitch poured down upon them as they neared the fortress. Still they pressed on, and swarming up the low building, found entrance here and there. For fully an hour the attack and the defence were vigorously maintained. The time would have been much shorter, but that the archers, who formed the covering party on the hill, were no longer able to give assistance to their friends, when besiegers and besieged were commingled in the fight. At length the enemy gained entrance at all points, and then the stratagem of Realmah had its full effect. The floorings everywhere descended almost

simultaneously, and nothing was to be heard but the cries of drowning men, shouting helplessly for succour from their friends, who were cut off from them. Thus ended the first day's siege, with a signal failure on the part of the besiegers.

For seventeen days there was no further attack. Realmah was at first much puzzled at this inaction, but by his spies he soon learnt that a division of the enemy's army had gone to attack Abinamanche, the capital of the Phelatahs.

He readily conjectured that this was done in order to possess themselves of the fleet of canoes belonging to Abinamanche, and therefore was not the least surprised when, on the fifteenth and sixteenth days after the first encounter, he perceived numerous canoes creeping along the shore, and making their rendezvous not far from the enemy's head-quarters on the shore.

On the eighteenth day the siege recommenced. This time it was a much more formidable attack. It may seem strange, but will be accounted for hereafter, that Realmah did not bring his own little fleet of canoes into action, but reserved it for a much more critical occasion.

The enemy, who were skilled warriors, having been accustomed to fight the men of their own hardy North, had not been idle during these seventeen days. Besides availing themselves of the fleet of the Phelatahs, they had constructed three times the number of rafts with which they had attempted the former attack.



On this second attack they brought no less than 16,000 men into immediate action.

Realmah was undismayed. He had too long thought of the coming evil to be unprepared for it.

It is needless to give the almost innumerable details of the attack and defence on this day. Both sides showed the utmost determination; but, as the sun descended behind Bidolo-Vamah, that luminary might have seen that the enemy had made a lodgment in Abibah, and that their troops occupied the "Street of the Ambassadors," which ran parallel to the fortress that had been the point of attack on the first day, and which communicated with the whole of the southern part of the town by four other principal streets. Previously to this lodgment being made by the enemy, Realmah had caused barricades to be formed at the end of these streets.

For eleven more days no fresh general attack was made by the enemy, though continual fighting and great slaughter took place at these barricades.

Meanwhile the valorous Athlah was re-forming his army. Meanwhile the enemy were constructing more rafts.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### THE CONDUCT OF THE VARNAH DURING THE SIEGE.

I INTERRUPT the description of the horrors of the siege to tell what part the Varnah took in it. The

present was an occasion on which her great ability in practical matters shone forth.

She knew her husband's character intimately. She was, perhaps, the only person in his wide dominions who had never changed her view of that character. She liked him because he was very indulgent, and very reasonable—for a man. Moreover, he was a good listener, and entered into all her plans for the welfare of the people very heartily.

Spiritual things were not in her domain. She knew that she was not great in comforting Realmah ; and, excellent woman that she was, wished that the Ainah was alive again for that part of the business. She was the only person who conjectured how much comfort Realmah had derived from the Ainah's sympathy.

The Varnah was one of those women who really have a considerable disrespect for men. She thought contemptuously of their objects in life. She knew that Realmah was great amongst men : he was very clever in managing councils, and settling about treaties and alliances ; but she looked upon all these matters as a kind of amusement for beings who did not see what is the real object of life—namely, to be thriving and comfortable.

She was always, however, very deferential, both in public and private, to her husband, and was greatly vexed that Talora did not see that similar conduct on her part was an absolute duty. Much as the Varnah feared Talora's bitter tongue and cruel temper, she

once or twice plucked up courage to tell her that she did not behave well to the man who had raised them both to the great position which they occupied.

Her Loftiness was greatly liked by the people. Even her frugality had endeared her to them. People do not like others the less for having something to laugh at about them. Her subjects had well known that Her Loftiness was a very frugal woman, fond of acquisition, very different from their king ; but they forgave her these defects when they found that she was willing to sacrifice all her treasures for the public good.

On the present occasion she was in the most fitting element for the display of her gifts and powers. In every place where her presence was needful she was to be found encouraging, consoling, and proffering aid, medicaments, and food with a most liberal hand. No one said now that Her Loftiness was acquisitive or mean ; but they felt what true generosity there may be in a prudence which is only prudent for the sake of others.

Far otherwise was it with Talora. She was ever declaring blame, and prophesying disaster. Realmah grew so wearied of her depressing influence that he had her conveyed to the head-quarters of Athlah's army, while he kept the Varnah with him, as his first aide-de-camp, and as the true dear friend to whom he could tell everything, even the worst that had befallen him.

She had one great merit in his eyes : she never

troubled him by wishing to know what he was doing. Realmah received her as he did one of his generals, and gave her instructions as if she had been a man.

I have said that the Varnah, when married, was not remarkable for good looks. But dignity sat well upon her; and whatever beauty and grace she possessed had been developed by the greatness of her position. Such simple-minded characters as hers are never deficient in dignity; and Realmah was thankful that, in this emergency, such a woman had been vouchsafed to him, as his friend and counsellor, if not his consoler, who was worthy in so many respects to be the Queen of the Sheviri, and who proved to be far greater in adversity than in prosperity.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

##### THE LAST DAYS OF THE SIEGE.

ON the twelfth day after the lodgment was effected, another great attack was made upon the southern and western quarters of the town.

A few words must here be given in explanation of the way in which Abibah had been built.

When the first settlers commenced driving their piles, there was, from some inequality in the nature of the ground at the bottom of the lake, a curved line about eighteen feet in breadth and about a

thousand yards in length, in which the piles sank hopelessly into soft mud, finding no footing. This part therefore had been abandoned as foundation, and had been bridged over by flooring which could easily be removed. It divided the city in this way: that two-fifths of the city were on the southern and western side of this sort of covered canal, and three-fifths on the other side. The canal itself was called "The Way of the Pescaras" (the largest kind of fish found in those waters). Unfortunately, there was a bit of the eastern quarter of the town which was in a similar way cut off from the main part of that eastern quarter by a canal. The enemy became aware of this fact. That island, if it may be so called, in the eastern quarter, was mainly occupied by a small fortress.

The attack, on the part of the besiegers, commenced at the rising of the sun. The number of assailants who were brought into immediate action was twice as great as that which had been brought into action on the previous occasion. And, moreover, they had this great advantage, that their people had gained and maintained a lodgment in the "Street of the Ambassadors." From early morning till late evening the battle raged furiously in the southern and western quarters, and also at that part of the eastern quarter which I have described.

By the evening all the barricades were forced. The women and children were hastily removed into the northern and eastern quarters of the town, where

the poor creatures were huddled together in the open spaces.

Where the battle raged most furiously was in the great market-place, which, for the sake of convenience, as being nearer to the land whence they drew their supplies, was in the southern part of the town. Here Realmah himself was present, though not taking much part in the action. In his mind he compared the attack of the numerous enemy to a flood of molten lava. The comparison was a just one; for, as in the flow of a stream of lava it is at the edges of the torrent that there is least force, while at the middle part it boils up and overflows the edges, so it was with the attack of the enemy, who pressed over the prostrate bodies of their own men, and overwhelmed Realmah's now disheartened forces.

The shades of evening came on, and found the men of the North in possession of the two-fifths of the town, bounded by the Pescara Canal; and also, which was still more alarming, of the fortress in the eastern quarter of the town. The slaughter on both sides had been immense; and, alas! many women and children of the town of Abibah had been slain during this dreadful day. One remarkable incident must be commemorated. Litervi, that cautious and judicious councillor, had returned from his mission, and had been placed in command of the eastern fortress. Like another great man whose fate is commemorated in the story of one of the greatest sieges that ever took place in the world, Litervi

had found himself alone at the topmost part of the fortress, with all his warriors slain around him; and, after hurling his massive club (for he was one of those old-fashioned warriors who could not take to the new weapons) upon the enemy beneath him, he threw himself down—being resolved to slay at least one of the enemy by that last missile. This was told to Realmah, who merely remarked that Litervi was a wise, happy, and good man.

Llama-mah, too, had shown his devotion in a very unexpected manner. According to the usual theory, Llama-mah, who had been a flatterer in the days of prosperity, ought to have been a coward and betrayer in the days of adversity. But men are so strange in their ways that there is no accounting for them. Llama-mah, at the risk of his own life (for he received a dangerous wound), had stepped in front of Realmah and saved the King's life in the great fight in the market-place; for Llama-mah really loved the man he had so often flattered and beguiled.

Realmah sat in the great Hall of Audience on the evening of this day's disastrous fight. A cordon of his guard kept off the crowd of persons who came for orders, admitting them one by one. Suddenly a head, which had been hurled over the canal by the enemy with loud triumphant shouts, was brought to Realmah. He recognised at once the noble features of Londardo, who, it appears, had fallen in some skirmish, while leading the scattered troops of the Phelatahs to the place of rendezvous.

Realmah was much affected by this sight, but did not show what he felt. He merely observed—"Preserve it for a noble burial when we have conquered."

All night long the King received his chieftains, and gave to each man the orders or the encouragement that he required. There was one thing that much astonished these chieftains, who were all men of high rank,—namely, that sundry obscure persons, mere artisans, fishermen, and iron-workers, were admitted to Realmah's presence, and had long audiences of the King.

The first faint dawn of morning, with its cold grey light, began to appear. Realmah quitted the Hall of Audience and went up to the topmost story of his uncle's palace, now his own. Realmah was fond of high places; and this topmost story, or watch-tower, having an open gallery round it, was the only addition he had made to that palace.

What a scene was spread before him! Towards the north and west he could hardly discern any water for the innumerable rafts of the enemy, which now surrounded those parts of the town. To the extreme east, however, there was a sight to be seen which gladdened the King's heart. A large army of the Sheviri and their allies was posted on the eastern heights about three miles and a half distant; and, to attack them, numerous bodies of the enemy's troops were already beginning to march eastward, deserting their quarters on the southern shore of the town.



Realmah had ordered that, upon no account, whatever might happen, should he be disturbed while he remained in this watch-tower. Joyfully he observed the movement of the enemy's troops on shore, until the greater part of them had moved to a position within a mile's distance of Athlah's. He then raised a large green flag, and watched with satisfaction his little fleet, which he had kept far out of harm's way until the present moment (a fleet of arrant cowards, as the enemy called them), move in good order, round the eastern part of the town, and take up a position close to the southern quarter of the town, near that part of the shore which the enemy had abandoned.

Meanwhile he had raised a large red flag which he still kept in his hand. One half-hour, a time of dreadful suspense, in which Realmah seemed to himself to live a life, passed away ; and then, to his infinite joy, appeared in twenty or thirty different places in the southern and western parts of the town, on the further side of the Pescara Canal, light wreaths of smoke—the prelude to so many great fires.

Realmah's plan was simple. He had resolved to sacrifice two-fifths of his town, and by that means to secure victory. His own escape at the outbreak of the revolution had long given him the groundwork of this plan. He had caused maps to be carefully made of what we may call the underground, or rather underfloor, part of his city, and knew to a nicety those devious paths upon the waters along which

small boats could make their way amongst the piles. Thirty canoes, which had been moored under his palace, had been destined for this work of incendiaryism; and their men had been furnished with the most inflammable materials.

Realmah had hardly time to descend from his watch-tower and place himself at the head of his troops before the flames had burst out furiously in many quarters of that part of the town occupied by the enemy. They were utterly dismayed by this new and unexpected form of attack, and before they had time to recover their presence of mind, Realmah had thrown planks across the Pescara Canal, forming temporary bridges, and was upon them.

His own people had not thoroughly known Realmah before that day. There are two lines of Byron's which well describe what had been, and what were now, Realmah's feelings and his mode of action:—

“ Then all was stern collectedness and art,  
Now rose the unleavened hatred of his heart.”

Thus it is ever with men in whose natures are combined great passion and great prudence. A hundred times, perhaps, they play with the hilt of their swords; and the bystander, or opponent, little knows how much they have longed to draw them, and what restraint they have exercised upon themselves. But when the time has come, and they do flash forth those swords, it is with a fury that contains in itself the

long-accumulated passion hitherto oppressed and controlled, but never really annihilated, by the restraints of prudence.

The King's feelings were very bitter against the men of the North. To them he traced all the misfortunes of his life. By reason of them he had been made a prisoner. For them he had lost his Ainah. To contend with them, he had left the peaceful paths of life so dear to him, and had become a king, with all the miseries (for to such a man miseries they were) of kingly state. Silently he had seen his choicest troops fall before these barbarians. Silently, and with no outward demonstration of sorrow, but with tears of the heart, he had seen the poor women and children of Abibah slaughtered before his eyes; and, at this moment, he saw a large part of the city he loved so well about to be consumed by fire, to get rid of these hateful invaders.

The King was that day as one possessed. Danger and Death, as if scared by such a madman, fled before him. His guards, the most active and energetic of the young men, toiled after their sickly, careworn, almost-deformed King, in vain.

The enemy in the city being attacked at once by fire, by the fierce Realmah, and by the fleet of boats which prevented their escape, and cut off their retreat, perished nearly to a man. Those on the rafts made at once for the southern shore, where they joined the main body of the troops, who, discovering the stratagem that had been devised against them, quitted their

position opposite to Athlah's camp, and returned to their old quarters.

There was mourning and lamentation in the enemy's camp that night. Three of their greatest chiefs (amongst them it was said the King of the North himself) had perished in the town.

All night the flames rose higher and higher, and affronted the placid skies. These flames did not invade that part of the town which lay to the north and east of the canal ; but the rest of the town was completely consumed. There was not, however, a man amongst the Sheviri so base as to lament publicly the loss of his own habitation.

Meanwhile Realmah joined Athlah. The next day a great attack was made upon the position of the men of the North ; and their complete defeat ensued. Hardly a man escaped to tell the tale ; but Realmah, naturally merciful, gave orders for sparing the women and children who had accompanied the men of the North. These were incorporated into the nation of the Sheviri, who learnt many of the arts of life from their captives.

Thus were the men of the North defeated, without the aid of pestilence and famine ; and, for generations, they did not venture again to invade the now indomitable South. The name of Realmah became a word of terror with which they scared their fretful children into swift obedience. "And the land had peace."

*Ellesmere.* I am not too much devoted to Realmah, but I am glad that he and the besieged have got the best of it. I am always on the side of the besieged. I remember becoming quite excited on behalf of the Dutch when I read Motley's account of the siege of Antwerp.

*Sir Arthur.* And then, as boys, how we pitied poor Priam, and longed for Hector to gain the victory. I suppose there is no boy who has not been against that bully Achilles, and who has not been anxious to blab to the Trojans about the real contents of that wooden horse, which seems so stupid a device.

*Lady Ellesmere.* I wonder that the Trojan women did not find it out. Now Realmah would not have been taken in by such a device, for he had something of woman's nature in him, and of woman's wit.

*Ellesmere.* Say craft. But indeed, my lady, you are talking a great man's talk without knowing it. That deep thinker, but not always perfectly intelligible writer, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, maintained that all the greatest men have something of the feminine nature in them.

*Sir Arthur.* One Trojan maiden, Lady Ellesmere, did warn her people—Cassandra; but nobody believed in her.

“Tunc etiam fatis aperit Cassandra futuris  
Ora, dei jussu, non unquam credita Teucris.”

*Lady Ellesmere.* Without translating, gentlemen must not talk Latin, nor smoke, nor swear, in the presence of ladies.

*Ellesmere.* She thinks now she has been very epigrammatic. Then men may swear if they translate it? The commonest form of muddlement in sentences is occasioned by this endeavour to be brief. You apply two or three nominatives to one verb, or two or three verbs

to one nominative, which do not agree together if you look at them separately. I am obliged to translate for Lady Ellesmere. What she did mean was,—that, in the presence of ladies, men must not smoke without permission: must not swear at all: and must not quote Latin without translating it.

*Sir Arthur.* Sir John's conjugal correction of Lady Ellesmere, of the justice of which I am very dubious,—

*Ellesmere.* Saccharinity again!

*Sir Arthur.* —has given me time to make my translation :—

“ For ever disbelieved by Trojan ears,  
So willed the god, Cassandra told her fears.”

*Ellesmere.* Such an odd thought struck me while Milverton was reading.

I recalled to my mind Dr. Johnson's going about, with his ink-bottle stuck in his coat, at the sale of Thrale's brewery, and saying, “ We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.”

You do not see how this applies, do you? But I said to myself, We are not here to listen to the obscure battles of the Sheviri and the Phelatahs, of the Doolmen or the Koolmen, and their Athlahs, and Realmahs, and Lockmars (about as interesting, as Milton would have said, as the battles of kites and crows); but we are listening to the political notions of a man who is contemplating the present state of Europe and America.

What he means I do not know for certain, but I have ideas.

*Sir Arthur.* And so have I.

*Ellesmere.* But I shall not declare my ideas, because Milverton will be sure to say they are not the right ones.

*Cranmer.* I am sure I do not see what is meant.

*Ellesmere.* Perhaps not ; I only said I had ideas. They are not taxable things, Cranmer, and you cannot prevent my having them. They won't hurt you, Cranmer.

*Mauleverer.* I see nothing more in it than this, which I believe I knew before, without the aid of the ingenious Milverton, that men had always had plenty of tyrants and oppressors among them, and that, a few times in the world's history, these tyrants and oppressors had been beaten back.

But the Northmen will come again, and then there will be no Realmah to resist them.

*Ellesmere.* I know all about it. I know the nation which eventually conquered the Lake cities : and, what is of more importance, I know how the nation attained to its greatness.

To make the rest of Sir John's discourse intelligible, I must give a little explanation. Sir John is a man who indulges in very few theories. He chiefly employs himself in demolishing the theories of other people ; but one theory he has, and holds to very strongly, viz. that grey-eyed people are much cleverer, wiser, and better than the black-eyed or the blue-eyed. It was pointed out to him that Lady Ellesmere has grey eyes, and we knew that he would never admit in public that she had any especial merit. He merely said that this was the one exception which did not "prove the rule," as foolish people say, but

which confirmed the statement that there is an exception to almost every rule, however well founded.

*Ellesmere.* The nation in question was the nation of the Gogoes. A Gogoe of more intelligence than his neighbours put forth the theory that all the blue-eyed female children under three years of age should be made into mince-meat. This theory found favour among many ingenious and thoughtful people. There was soon a mince-meat society, then a mince-meat newspaper.

The question then entered into the domain of politics. The Gogoes were chiefly governed by two great councils. The most potent council was that which sat in the Hall of Echoes, and was an elected body. The other council consisted of the stoutest men of the community, and was an assemblage of Mauleverers, but chiefly of a jolly nature.

The mince-meat question was taken up by an important party in the first-named council. They were never able, however, to make it the law of the land.

You can easily imagine what an excellent subject it was for debate—how much there was to be said on both sides of the question. Eventually the anti-mince-meat party came into power.

Here I am going to say something so profound, and yet so simple, as regards politics, that if people were allowed to carry round a hat, and to receive subscriptions when they had said anything very good, I should, of course, receive much largesse from this liberal company.

It is this. You suppose that the mince-meat party fell from power for some great political reason. Those are the kind of reasons that historical people, like Milverton, endeavour to impose upon us, to account for great political



changes ; whereas I am a practical man, and I know better. The party fell because people were tired of it. You think that it is only Aristides of whom his neighbours were tired. But I tell you that Julius Cæsar, Sejanus, Thomas à Becket, Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, and a host of others, fell—simply because the principal people concerned with them were tired of them. You are fond, Milverton, of quoting that saying of Talleyrand, “that he was avid of facts.” I say that “all men are avid of change.” Why, men become tired even of themselves, and of their position, however powerful ! And thus it was that the mince-meat party in the Gogoe Hall of Echoes fell.

Meanwhile public opinion amongst the Gogoes had been pronounced more and more in favour of the mince-meat question. What did the party newly in power do ? They were always for large measures, if they were for any measures at all. Largeness was their forte. They proposed that the black-eyed portion of the young maidens should undergo the same fate as that which had been proposed for the blue-eyed.

The original mince-meat party was astounded ; but what could they say or do ? Their arguments against the blue-eyed were found to have equal force against the black-eyed, and the large measure passed unanimously.

From that time forward the Gogoes became a great nation. They were not so much “blessed”—or shall we say “bored?”—by an affluence of women, as the surrounding nations were ; but all their women, whether won by conquest of neighbouring nations, or born in their own territory, were grey-eyed, which became the fashionable colour. It was the Gogoes, as far as my historical researches have gone, who devastated Europe, and conquered the

Lake Cities, and to this day their grey-eyed descendants are ruling men wherever they are to be found.

The original country of the Gogoes (this will be a Milvertonian touch) is where the great river Niebelungen curves round the base of the great mountain Oltivago, and falls into the Lake of Palmah, which was then the central part of Europe. I flatter myself that that is equally precise and descriptive, and conveys to you the idea of a territory which can easily be recognised in the present day.

We all laughed very much at the droll way in which Sir John had illustrated his favourite theory, and had combined it with a satirical view of modern politics. Afterwards there was no more conversation, and we went our separate ways.

## CHAPTER XIII.

MY master, Mr. Milverton, has a great dislike to taking a walk. He can be energetic enough if there is anything to be seen, or done; but walking for walking's sake is odious to him. When the others were going for a walk, he would accompany them across the little bit of flat garden, and even to the entrance of a paddock: but there he would take leave of them, unless there were some remarkable clouds to be seen which could be observed better in the open space of the paddock. Beyond the confines of the paddock I hardly ever knew him favour anybody with his company.

I mention this trifling circumstance because it occasionally prevented me from reporting conversations which I should like to have reported.

Mr. Milverton always viewed with pity anybody who went for a long walk. He would say, "Ellesmere has gone for a long walk upon the Downs to-day, poor fellow!" And I really believe he did pity Sir John upon such an occasion, though Sir John himself immensely enjoyed getting rid of some of

his superfluous energy by a walk of ten or twelve miles.

Upon the present occasion they had all gone for a long walk, except Mr. and Mrs. Milverton and myself. We stayed at home and worked at "Realmah."

On their return, they all came rushing into our study, boasting of the immense walk they had taken, with a kind of insolence, as if they had done something wonderful; and calling us "muffs" for having stayed at home all day.

I will now report the conversation which followed :—

*Ellesmere.* Ah! Master Leonard, we have had such brilliant talk during our excursion. I would have given anything for you to have been with us. After discussing almost all human affairs with a degree of wisdom which is only known to stalwart walkers, we came to a question which would have delighted you. It was, Given a benevolent fairy (I have never myself held a brief for any such party, but Sir Arthur is sure that there are such parties), and given that the said fairy offered to each of us the absolute fulfilment of any wish we might please to make, what should we wish for? Now you know you would have been in your element in such a conversation. You must not suppose for a moment that this was the ordinary benevolent-fairy business. I limited their wishes in this way—that they must wish for something, not for themselves, but for the good of the world, and that the something in question must not be foolishly wide and conclusive, such as "I wish that everybody may be happy and good;" in short, they were to wish for means, not ends. Moreover—and this was the best

part of my limitation, as it knocked off all such things as invisible coats, and ten-leagued boots, and swords of all-powerful sharpness that would make their way even to the brains of bores in Parliament—that the thing wished for must be an increase of something which is in existence.

I need hardly tell you what they all wished for. Mr. Cranmer, of course, wished that the benevolent fairy would endow him with an insight into the depths of political economy, and especially favour him with its views about the Bank Charter Act, in order that he might make the world happy by his next speech upon that subject in the ensuing session of Parliament.

Sir Arthur, of course, wished that the benevolent fairy would impress upon mankind his notions of the beautiful. He thought that an increased perception of beauty in nature and in art would add immensely to human happiness.

Mr. Mauleverer wished that the *benevolent* fairy would have the goodness to inform mankind thoroughly and completely what a miserable set of wretches they are. They would not then follow after all manner of foolish schemes of happiness, which only lead to disappointment.

Lady Ellesmere expressed a wish that the benevolent fairy would instruct mankind as to the wonderful qualities and merits of her son Johnny. His future success in the world would be the best means she knew of for insuring happiness to mankind.

*Cranmer.* There are very few grains of truth, we need hardly tell you, Milverton, in all he has said.

*Ellesmere.* I disregard their vain assertions. You know as well as I do, Milverton, that these were their secret thoughts, even if they pretended to wish for others.

Now, what do you say?

*Milverton.* Well, if I must make a choice, I should say this : Please, benevolent fairy, grant that there should be more love in the world.

*Ellesmere.* This is vague. These philosophers are always vague. What do you mean by love ?

*Milverton.* You know very well what I mean—that charity, as described by St. Paul, should prevail to the extent which that great Apostle himself desired.

*Ellesmere.* Well, Master Sandy, and what do you say ?

*Johnson.* Well, I say, Let intellect prevail : let the great thinkers among mankind be able to impress their views upon the rest.

*Ellesmere.* This, now, is also somewhat vague. Like master, like man ! The thinkers differ amongst themselves. My dear Sandy, you must be more precise. You know very well what you mean—namely, that what Milverton dictates and you write should govern the whole of the habitable globe.

*Johnson.* I do, Sir John.

*Ellesmere.* That is an honest boy. Have you nothing especial to say about Scotland ?

*Johnson.* No ; I will be quite content with the wish I have expressed.

*Ellesmere.* Now, Mrs. Milverton, it is your turn to have a wish. Shall we wish that Milverton shall be made Lord Milverton ? Shall we wish that little Leonard shall cut all his teeth without suffering, and shall become one of the wisest of mankind ?

*Mrs. Milverton.* I will not have words thrust into my mouth. I am not going to say anything that Sir John Ellesmere chooses that I should say. My wish is of a totally different kind. I wish that all mankind should see the beauty of what Goethe calls Renunciation.

*Milverton.* Bravo, my dear! I believe that you have mentioned *the* thing which would tend most to raise mankind into a higher atmosphere of being.

*Mrs. Milverton.* This is not my own idea; but what, in his most serious mood, I have heard Leonard dilate upon.

*Ellesmere.* You see, Lady Ellesmere, what it is to follow out your husband's views. If you had only said that your wish was that there should be an affluence of good and good-natured criticism—in fact, that there should be a *Saturday Review* for every day in the week—what *kudos* you would have gained from this worshipful company!

Now then, Sir Arthur, and Mr. Cranmer, and Mr. Mauleverer, and Lady Ellesmere, if I have not represented you all truly, say your say.

*Mauleverer.* I say, Let the earth produce more corn, and with less trouble.

*Sir Arthur.* I say, Let the distinction of nations, or rather of races, cease to have such effect as they have had in latter days.

*Ellesmere.* You forget, Sir Arthur: you must ask for something more, not something less.

*Sir Arthur.* Well, then, let there be more cosmopolitan good feeling.

*Lady Ellesmere.* What I wish is this: That the feeling for pain (physical pain, if you please to put it so) should be so predominant throughout mankind, that no one should knowingly do anything which should increase the physical pain of man, woman, animal, fish, or insect.

Here the ladies rose and left us.

*Ellesmere.* I declare the women have been very clever

to-day. It was very sharp of Mrs. Milverton "going in," as the slang phrase is, for "Renunciation;" and for my wife trying to do away with all pain that is caused by our recklessness of physical sufferings. Of course, she does not see the full extent of her views, and that all war would be put an end to, if her benevolent fairy granted her the wish that she seeks for. But now, Cranmer, you protested against my representation of your opinions. What do you wish the fairy to grant you?

*Cranmer.* That representative government should be brought to perfection, and should prevail everywhere.

*Ellesmere.* I declare you are all very unkind to me: you have never seriously asked what I wish for.

*Sir Arthur.* Pray tell us. We are sure that it will be something quite out of the common way.

*Ellesmere.* No; I believe what I should ask would be the greatest boon that could be demanded for mankind. I only ask this simple, trifling thing—that good reasoning should have its exact weight with mankind.

Now all of you think that this is a small, poor, inadequate wish; but you may depend upon it, it beats all of yours out of the field.

Give me one thousand millions of mankind (that is the present number on the earth, is it not, Cranmer?) reasoning accurately upon the arguments brought before them, and I, for my part, do not wish any more.

I hate to "talk shop," as it is called; but if you will give me the present Lord Chancellor, that good, just, and honest man, Lord —, to decide upon all questions for the world, I shall be perfectly satisfied. And if my wish were granted, every man would be as good an appreciator of arguments as Lord —.



*Sir Arthur.* So, you would remit all earthly and heavenly questions to the Court of Chancery.

*Ellesmere.* I would ; and you will never have a tribunal so competent to decide upon them. We don't look at popular opinion, or at aristocratic opinion, or at philosophic opinion, or at unphilosophic opinion ; we decide upon the exact matters brought before us ; and I do say, however much it might horrify you, that if you would only have the humility to submit any great question to the judicial authorities of this kingdom, it would be well decided.

*Milverton.* What, the highest abstract questions ?

*Ellesmere.* Yes. We—I am speaking for the great lights of the Bench—are equal to decide any earthly question brought before us. We have ascertained what justice means. We are really impartial. I believe that in England there is more of the judicial faculty developed than in any other nation. Newspapers, what you are pleased to call public opinion, political considerations of all kinds, personal considerations of all kinds, weigh not with us. We shall simply (I am speaking for our great judges) give its due weight exactly to what is brought before us to decide upon.

I must admit that Sandy and I seem to have somewhat of the same idea. There is, however, this distinction.—He says, Let great intellect prevail ; I say, Let good reasoning prevail. According to his system there would be endless contention ; whereas, according to mine, there would be clear judicial decision and precise action consequent thereupon.

The company then rose.

*Mauleverer.* Stay. I must say something more. You have all taken this matter more seriously than I expected,

and I desire to recall my former wish. I should ask for more knowledge.

It has become the fashion in this house of late, to express one's ideas after the mode of the Sheviri, by fables or apologues. Now I wish you to listen very patiently to a little story of mine.

Once upon a time there was an island (I observe most of your stories relate to islands), the unfortunate inhabitants of which were molested in this way:—An invisible fiend, supposed to rise from the ground, would lay hold of one of these inhabitants and give him a sound beating, making every bone to ache. The fiend would repeat this chastisement at regular intervals, say every two, three, or four days, at the same hour of the day. At last any poor man who was so persecuted would tremble and shiver all over when the time for his punishment came. But if this poor man had but known (see the advantage of knowledge) one or two simple things, he could have defied his enemy.

The first was a salve which, when applied to the eyes, rendered the foul fiend perfectly visible. Now this fiend was a slow, dull, heavy fiend,—

*Ellesmere.* Slow, dull, heavy, and punctual, therefore a good fiend of business, as we say a good man of business, Cranmer.

*Mauleverer* — and never could mount higher than thirty feet.<sup>1</sup> Consequently if the man went up a ladder thirty feet high, he could laugh at the dull fiend, and defy him.

But more than this, there was a good-natured wood-sprite, a dryad, who would walk hand-in-hand with any of the poor

<sup>1</sup> See an excellent paper on this subject in a recent number of *All the Year Round*.

men of the island, and would carry him safely through any of the fastnesses of the foul fiend. Unfortunately, however, for thousands of years, neither the eye-salve, nor the habitation of the wood-sprite, who by the way lived some six thousand miles off, though he would come at a minute's notice, were known to the inhabitants of the island

*Cranmer.* I have not the least idea what you mean. I wish all of you would talk more plainly. You despise blue books, but really they are much more intelligible than you are with your pink and blue "sleep," and with your Spoolans, and foul fiends and wood-sprites.

*Mauleverer.* To come down then to a blue book, the foul fiend is the ague. The eye-salve is the microscope, which has shown us exactly the limits of the ague spore. The wood-sprite is Jesuit's bark or quinine.

Now I beg to ask you, Milverton, whether your "love," or Mrs. Milverton's "renunciation;" or, Mr. Johnson, your "thinking;" or, Ellesmere, your "reasoning," would ever have found out a remedy for the ague? No: you must all admit that I should ask the fairy for the right thing, merely, more knowledge.

I hope too, you all observe, that the instance I have given shows the exceeding misery of man, and how much too small he is for his place, that he should go on suffering all this misery for thousands of years when a little knowledge would have raised him above it.

Depend upon it the present generation is suffering in an exactly similar way from many such evils, moral, intellectual, and physical, which a little more knowledge would dispel.

No one made any reply, and the company then separated.

## CHAPTER XIV.

I WAS telling Mr. Milverton the interest I had felt in the conversation of yesterday about the choice of gifts from the benevolent fairy. "Well," he said, "if you like this kind of fanciful discussion, we will have another. What shall we choose? I think it would call out all Ellesmere's comicalities, if we were to ask what he would do if his life were to be prolonged to the length of those of the patriarchs."

When two people have resolved that a conversation shall come to a particular point, they can always manage to effect their object. Accordingly, when we next met, Mr. Milverton and myself soon contrived to place the question before Sir John Ellesmere in the manner that we had proposed, and the conversation proceeded thus:—

*Ellesmere.* I am to have a 900 years' life. Let me see, what age did I convince you all the other day that I was? I think thirty-seven. Well, then, in the first place, I decline to live 863 years with Lady Ellesmere. You know, my dear, you are a most agreeable woman; but in the course of a few hundred years, always struggling, as you do, for

mastery, you would be sure to gain complete power over me, and I object to being such a slave as you would then make of me.

*Lady Ellesmere.* There was nothing said, John, about my having the same term of life as yours. No person, even in imagination, could be so cruel as to make a poor woman live for hundreds of years with you.

*Sir Arthur.* Pray let these interesting conjugal remarks cease ; and let us hear what you would aim at, Ellesmere, if you had before you this great length of life.

*Ellesmere.* I have no objection to tell you. But you must not fancy that everything I say is a joke. I do not like being always the funny man of the company. If I say something which I really mean, but which does not happen to fit in with your small notions of wisdom and propriety, you laugh your silly laughs, and have not the slightest faith in the earnestness of what I say.

*Cranmer.* We will believe in you, Sir John, as much as we possibly can.

*Milverton.* Now then, Ellesmere, proceed.

*Ellesmere.* In the first place, I would abolish the penny post.

*Milverton.* That we knew before.

*Ellesmere.* In the next place I would disinvent telegraphic communication.

*Milverton.* Good. That we knew too.

*Ellesmere.* When I say I would do this thing, or that thing, you must readily see that I should have the power to do it, because, outliving the rest of mankind, I should get the whip-hand of the whole nation. My experience would prevail over theirs, and I should be universally listened to and respected.

I should abolish bells, and so win Sir Arthur's heart. I mean out-of-door bells. I never met with any sensible person who liked these noises.

*Milverton.* True : but really, Ellesmere, what small things you are proposing.

*Ellesmere.* Well, I will come to much greater, then. I would set my face against the growth of great cities. People laugh at James the First, and think him a pedant and a fool ; but I have always thought him very wise in his strong objection to the increase of London. If you allow cities to increase in this way you, ultimately get them so big that it is impossible to have fresh air. I am as serious as I ever was in my life, when I say that the perpetual and rapid increase of London is a grief to me.

*Milverton.* I quite agree with you.

*Ellesmere.* Well, then, I would build a house—a model house. I really think that a great many of the evils that afflict mankind are to be traced to the badness of habitations. I do not bother myself with what your sanitary reformers say about things ; but I can see that nine-tenths of your difficulties would vanish if good houses and cottages were built.

*Cranmer.* But what do you mean by a good house ?

*Ellesmere.* Well, if you must know, I mean, in the first place, a washable house—washable thoroughly, inside and outside. Building, as I should, for 800 years, I should resolve to be free from paperers and painters and plasterers, and, in short, from repairers of all kinds.

*Sir Arthur.* But, Ellesmere, as Milverton says, you have hitherto mentioned such trivial things—mere mint and cummin.

*Ellesmere.* I would reform dress. Is that a small thing ?

Again : I would eſtabliſh recreation—ſuch recreation as has never hitherto been thought of. There ſhould be no town, however ſmall, which ſhould not have its appointed place for recreation—for indoors and out-of-doors recreations. In every town—yes, almoſt in every village—there is muſical talent enough to form the delight of the population if it were well developed.

*Milverton.* I really think that Ellesmere is upon the right tack now.

*Ellesmere.* I would alſo provide medical aid and ſervice for almoſt every centre of population, however ſmall.

By the way, I would certainly ſet up an Ædile.

*Mrs. Milverton.* I am very ignorant, but I do not know what an Ædile is. I ſuppoſe it is a perſon, not a thing. And if it is a perſon, what duties has he to perform ?

*Ellesmere.* It is ſaid that the late Biſhop of London being aſked by ſome inquiſitive foreigner (what a nuisance it is when people are always wanting information) what an Engliſh Archdeacon had to do, judiciously replied, “Oh, an Archdeacon is a perſon who performs Archidiaconal duties.” So I ſay an Ædile was a perſon who performed Ædilian duties. Seriously, I am afraid, in the preſence of theſe learned men, to undertake to give a full account of an Ædile’s duties. I may ſay briefly that he was the arch-putter-down of nuiſances. If there was ſuch an officer now—mark you, he was a very powerful man—I ſhould not be plagued with ſtreet cries, with the howling of my neighbour’s dog, with unwholeſome odours of all kinds ; and it would be his buſineſs to ſee that I was generally made comfortable. Only tell him that you ſuſpected that your goods were dealt out to you with falſe weights and meaſures, and he would ſoon ſettle that matter for you.

No Boards, nor Commissioners, nor people of that kind to consult, and to receive dreary official letters from; but you would have a swiftly-perambulating Lord Mayor with plenary authority. London would require a good many *Ædiles*.

*Cranmer.* Would you abolish lawyers?

*Ellesmere.* This is a very painful question; but I think I would. In the course of 800 years, using the legal talents of each generation, I should be able to arrange and codify the law; and then I would only have public notaries.

*Sir Arthur.* What about war?

*Ellesmere.* Here I should shine. Here would come in that practical good sense of which I possess so large a share. We are such a set of foolish, quarrelsome little beasts, and we derive so much pleasure from hearing about sieges and battles, and knowing of the miseries of our fellow-creatures, that I should not endeavour to abolish war altogether. But what I should do is this. I should reduce the European armies in the following proportion. I should allow them one man for each thousand that they now possess. France, for instance, should have 700 soldiers; Austria, about the same number; Prussia, 600; England, 450; Russia, 800; and the United States, 900.<sup>1</sup> The great naval powers should be allowed a ship apiece, and one or two gun-boats. These little armies and navies should go about fighting away like fun, and undertaking what would then be thought great battles and sieges. The newspapers would still be well fed with interesting events; and taxation for war purposes would be insignificant. I

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that this conversation took place some time ago.



should have outside the great cities little model cities, which should represent them for warlike purposes—a neat little Paris outside Paris: and I should scatter some squalidity in the way of building about Wimbledon Common, and call it in military despatches, London.

Again, another reform I should institute of the utmost magnitude is this: I should abolish after-dinner speeches.

*Sir Arthur.* The world would be grateful to you for that.

*Ellesmere.* Then I should bring my enormous power and experience to bear upon all literature. I should reduce three-volume novels to one.

*Cranmer.* But about the newspaper press? What should you do with that?

*Ellesmere.* For the sake of freedom, I should allow one article in each newspaper to be published without signature. To all the others I should require signature. I should make the newspapers into an octavo shape, with the leaves cut.

*Johnson.* What about the Church?

*Ellesmere.* I should forbid any one to preach a sermon more than once in three weeks. I would make sermons, instead of being nuisances, things to which the congregation would look forward with expectation, and listen with delight.

*Mauleverer.* What about education?

*Ellesmere.* Oh, in that matter I would institute reforms that would astound you. I would organize bands of well-instructed persons who should go about the country and teach everybody everything; and not merely teach in the ordinary way, but exemplify.

*Cranmer.* And this is your practical man, who laughs at theorists and enthusiasts!

*Ellesmere.* Recollect I have 800 years and more to work in. I should be able to organize a system which, if it were well developed, would far surpass the present. I would have people who could teach the rudiments of the best arts in life—who could instruct in cookery, in natural history—in the properties of earth, air, and water. I know what is to be said in respect of the shallowness that may result from mere lecturing; but, on the other hand, I have observed how greatly those people are enlightened, elevated, and instructed, who have had only what is called a smattering of knowledge, derived from judicious lectures. And then, look at this. There is a genius in some remote place or obscure position—one of those people described in Gray's Elegy,—

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear,”—

and the good seed of instruction falls upon his or her mind; and then we have an inventor. The consideration of Newton's life has always weighed much with me. It has been a great blessing to mankind that that wonderful man was not a labourer's child. Being a farmer's son, he got the *rudiments* of education, and upon that small platform what a building did he not erect! I mean my peasants' children to have, at least, all the advantages that Newton had.

*Sir Arthur.* I declare, Sir John, you are becoming quite eloquent.

*Ellesmere.* Oh! I should mainly rely upon education. That is the chief fulcrum upon which we could raise society.

*Cranmer.* What about political economy?

*Ellesmere.* Don't be unhappy, Cranmer. In the course of 800 years—about the 781st—I would settle the Bank Charter Act, and there should be no more of these absurd panics.

*Milverton.* What about government?

*Ellesmere.* I would in this respect institute reforms of which you are now only dreaming. Do you think I would be plagued to death with distant peoples' affairs? Not I. Do you think, as Sydney Smith says, I would have upon every bare rock, where a cormorant can hardly get its living, a Governor, and a Bishop, and an Attorney-General? Not but what the last-named officer would be useful anywhere; but still we must do without even him when we cannot afford to have him.

*Milverton.* I beg you all especially to remember what Ellesmere has just now said.

*Ellesmere.* Then, as to home government; I would abolish bribery and suppress bores in the House of Commons.

A man should prove to me that he knew something about government before he should govern; and not even Milverton himself, with all his schemes, should educe a more comprehensive form of official government than I, in my 800 years, would strive to create. You do not think I would have a Lord Privy Seal, do you, when the Privy Seal had ceased to be an entity of any importance?

*Cranmer.* What about the House of Lords?

*Ellesmere.* I would certainly make my House of Lords a senate consisting of the wisest and ablest men who had filled public functions, and also consisting of those men who, from their education, their health—or rather, their

want of health—and their peculiar nature, were not especially fit to solicit popular suffrages, but were justly fitted to become members of a legislative assembly.

*Milverton.* What would you do about the poor?

*Ellesmere.* Well, I feel that the labouring poor have an immense claim upon us. I would render smooth and happy their lives in their latter days. I believe that we could well afford to do so, and that these poor people have the greatest claim upon us. If a man or woman has worked, we will say, for fifty or sixty years, in the production of the fruits of the earth for us, we are bound, I think, to render happy, as far as we can, the last years of this poor person's life.

*Sir Arthur.* I must still say, Sir John, that your inventive genius does not take great flights. You would crush the penny post, disinvent—I think that was the word—the telegraph, build a house, abolish bell-ringing, and send round lecturers, who—if I make out right—were chiefly to be good cooks, improve the House of Lords, and a few other little transactions of that kind. But the human mind——

*Ellesmere.* Wait a bit, Sir Arthur. I am going to take the human mind, or rather the human soul, in hand presently. You may depend upon it, however, that the human body needs our first attention. How can a man be virtuous in a smoky house, listening to the noise of those detestable bells, startled by the penny postman's rap, delivering bills all the day, and being threatened by those alarming telegraph envelopes?

But now for the human mind. I shall put down jealousy. I do not mean man-and-woman jealousy; but all that misery which arises from sensitive people being afraid that they are not liked enough, that they are not made enough

of, that they are neglected, that somebody is foolish enough to prefer somebody else to them.

*Milverton.* Your 863 years will be full of work, I see.

*Ellesmere.* I am discontented with that word jealousy. Give me another word, Milverton.

*Milverton.* Claimfulness?

*Ellesmere.* Not a bad idea; but the word is an ugly word, and will not do.

*Milverton.* Claimativeness, then?

*Ellesmere.* That is better.

Now the reason that Milverton and I have been such good friends from boyhood upwards is, that we are both so free from jealousy, or, to use his own word, claimativeness.

This is no merit on his part; but a great one on mine. Of course Milverton has great faults in my eyes. He always likes everybody. He has fewer dislikes than any man I ever met with. Whereas I own to having a good many hearty dislikes—and he never partakes them with me. I might have been jealous or claimative a thousand times, seeing him take to people whom I cannot endure, and whom I might fancy he prefers to me.

You come and complain to him that So-and-So is a horrid bore, and Milverton replies:—"Well, but he has built a great many cottages on his estate,"—or "he is very kind to his three maiden aunts,"—or "he is very great in Byzantine literature,"—or "his views upon the digamma are sound,"—or "he is a great natural historian, supereminent in moths,"—or "he knows which are the edible fungi; and the poor would gain so much if the right fungi were brought into fashion."

Well, I distrust fungi: I do not care much for moths,

they are sure to worry one by burning themselves in the candle as a poor clergyman is to invest his savings in Poyais Bonds or any other destructive security. I loathe the digamma, which I believe to have been a thing invented by schoolmasters to plague mankind, or rather boykind. I am not attracted by the three maiden aunts, and I am not going to live in So-and-So's cottages; but I know that So-and-So is an egregious bore, and I might naturally be jealous of Milverton's making so much of this man.

I am really so free from jealousy or claimativeness, that if I were to find that Milverton had invited a very agreeable party to Worth Ashton, and I was not asked, I should not feel that I was neglected; but should conclude at once that there was good reason for my not being asked—that the digamma man was to be there, and it was thought that I should speak irreverently of the digamma, or that there was scarlatina in the village, and that no risk was to be run for dear little Johnny. In a word, I should firmly believe that Milverton would long to have me with him; but could not manage it. I should not be in the least claimative. Indeed the more I consider myself, which I seldom have time to do sufficiently, the more I perceive that I am really a very great man (though Lady Ellesmere does not think so); and in the course of these 863 years I should make other people as great as myself.

*Mr. Cranmer.* But how is this to be done, Sir John?

*Ellesmere.* Why, man, I should direct all literature and all education, and all sermonizing; and I should have claimativeness written, talked, educated, and sermonized down.

*Sir Arthur.* Does it ever enter into your imagination,

Sir John, that this claimativeness, which you inveigh against, proceeds from modesty?

*Ellesmere.* I hate modesty.

*Lady Ellesmere.* No wonder.

*Milverton.* But, seriously, my dear fellow, do consider that you have always been a successful man; that you have good health; that your enemies would say—not that I say it—that you have a little touch of hardness in your character; and that, perhaps, you do not make sufficient allowance for humble, timid, sensitive people, who are naturally prone to think they are neglected.

*Ellesmere.* It is all selfishness or immoderate self-esteem. That, too, is the cause of shyness. I am not shy.

*Lady Ellesmere.* Oh yes, you are, John. I do not know anybody who is more shy when he is in the company of those who do not sympathise with him, or understand him.

*Ellesmere.* Well, in the course of the 863 years I will get rid of shyness, and modesty, and claimativeness, and all my other vices—if I have any; and I will become a great man, and will bring all other people up to my level.

*Sir Arthur.* You are gradually to rule all literature. You kindly intimated to us that you would reduce all three-volume novels to one. How is this to be done?

*Ellesmere.* I am an outrageous and immoderate reader of fiction. I admire, as I have told you, the writers of fiction amazingly; but I have great faults to find with them, especially with their incidents.

Now, there is dear old Sandy there. He is just the sort of quiet, observant fellow to be mapping all our characters down, and forming us into a novel. I will address him as if he were an arch-novel writer, and will give him such

a lecture as will make him the first novel-writer of his time.

*Johnson.* Pray, do, Sir John, for then my fortune is made.

*Ellesmere.* Now, Sandy, you are the arch-novel writer, and I am the hero of the novel.

In the first place I decline to go to a picnic party. You novel-writers always make something very important occur at a picnic, whereas in real life I have never found anything important occur, except that the earwigs are mixed up with the salt. I will not go to a picnic.

*Johnson.* Yes, sir.

*Ellesmere.* I will not be upset from a boat. No sooner do I read in any novel that there is a river, or a lake, near the principal house, than I know that I, the hero, am to be upset from a boat. Matilda and Louisa are to be with me. Matilda I really love, Louisa I am engaged to. In rescuing these two dear creatures I am to throw Louisa carelessly into the bottom of the boat, while I am to support Matilda in my arms, and to whisper to her (loud enough to be heard by Louisa), "Matilda, dearest, open your eyes once more, and gaze upon your beloved Augustus." I object, in this damp fashion, to be brought to betray my affections and to lengthen out the second volume. Do you hear, Mr. Novel-writer?

*Johnson.* I do, Mr. Hero. You shall not be upset from a boat.

*Ellesmere.* Thank you. Well then, sir, I decline, after having enjoyed my property for twenty years, to have a will of my great-uncle's discovered in an old book, which should dispossess me of the property, and make me liable for the back rents received during those twenty years.



*Johnson.* The great-uncle's will shall not be found, Sir John.

*Ellesmere.* Thank you. Again, I do not wish my uncle in India, Mr. Currie Pudder, to have made a fortune and to leave it to me exactly at the right moment. I can do without my uncle.

*Sir Arthur.* There are few people who can.

*Johnson.* I must not be rash. I cannot promise you, Sir John, that you are not to have Mr. Currie Pudder as your rich uncle in India; and if you please, I must kill him when I choose, and not when it is perfectly convenient to you.

*Ellesmere.* Very good. There is one comfort, Master Sandy, that *you* are not going to live for 863 years.

I am now going to impress upon Mr. Novel-writer one of my strongest objections to his usual mode of proceeding. I have declined many pleasant things; and now I decline to be made successful in any calling or profession upon having merely distinguished myself upon one occasion. In your novel, Johnson, if I, the hero, make a speech, as a lawyer or a politician, produce a remarkable sermon as a clergyman, cure one difficult case as a doctor—all of a sudden, honours, dignities, and riches pour in upon me like a flood, and Matilda's father withdraws all his objections. If I am a poet, and write a sonnet; if I am a prose-writer, and write an essay; the great publishers all at once besiege my doors—that is, in the novel, for in real life I never experienced anything of the kind. My early sonnets were laughed at, and my first speeches were said to be “very well for a young man;” but Pump Court was not inundated by attorneys' clerks inquiring the way to Mr. Ellesmere's chambers.

The truth is, the world is very hard, and yet a somewhat elastic substance ; and you have to hit it many consecutive blows, and to keep on hitting it, before you produce any such impression as will create for you a serviceable reputation.

Why, in a novel I have known Mr. Hero rise suddenly from being a private secretary to being a Cabinet Minister ; but nothing like this happens in real life. When you see a successful man, you generally find him middle-aged, slightly bald, very haggard-looking, and generally with dints in his face which show how much he has endured and laboured. He is a much battered-about individual, and not at all like the young man who rejoices in Matilda's love, and who has suddenly, at one bound, prevailed over adverse fates, and conquered fortune.

Now, without any joking, it is a very mischievous thing to misrepresent life as novelists often do in this respect, and so to indicate that success is to be attained by anything but hard, long, and continuous effort.

Mr. Novel-writer, I would rather you would overwhelm me with rich uncles, or make me pick up treasure in Oxford Street, than delude me by making me put forth an all-commanding speech, sonnet, essay, or sermon. What do you say to this, Sandy?

*Johnson.* I really am placed in very unpleasant and difficult circumstances. My hero is without any money ; and Matilda's father is obdurate. My hero has gone forth to seek his fortune in the world ; and I really cannot wait until he is slightly bald and somewhat "battered," to use Sir John's expression, and Matilda has grown very stout, before they are to be married. What is to be done ? There must certainly be an unlimited supply of uncles, or on that

little bit of land which my hero has retained out of all his possessions, and which lies on the top of a down, a coal-mine must be discovered. I am not to be bullied by geology, at any rate.

*Ellesmere.* Well, discover your coal-mine for me, Sandy, in preference to your making statesmen and attorneys and publishers act contrary to their natures.

Well, then, I absolutely refuse to have a brain-fever brought on by change of circumstances and unaccustomed work at a critical time of my fortunes. I never had a brain-fever—even when Lady Ellesmere, benighted woman, at first refused to have anything to say to me. Have you had a brain-fever? or you, or you, or you, or you, or you? [turning to us all.]

We all answered in the negative.

Then why should I have one; and why should I reveal in moments of delirium my especial regard for Matilda—and her blue-grey eyes, black eyelashes, and auburn hair?

*Johnson.* I am very sorry not to be able to oblige a gentleman-hero in your position; but I am not sure that I can carry on my novel without your having a brain-fever.

*Ellesmere.* What tyrants and pedants these novel-writers are!

Well, one thing I protest against, namely—Matilda's coming and nursing me when I have the brain-fever. I cannot imagine a more disagreeable thing for a poor hero, when he is ill, than having the young woman he keeps company with come to look after him in his dangerous illness.

Would you like to hear the passage in the novel which describes the unpleasant transaction?

[We said that we should.]

"Edwin"—I like the name of Edwin better than Augustus—"had for a month been hovering between life and death. Dimly, during the last four days, he had been conscious of a presence which had seemed to him like a beautiful vision. On the fifth day he opened his eyes, and discerned a creature of joy and beauty which reminded him of his Matilda, but which he thought to be an angel.

"On the sixth day with a sigh he opened his eyes, regarded the vision steadily, and exclaimed, 'Matilda!'

"Later in the day he uttered the words, 'Again, again!'

This was in reality a demand for more chicken broth, but was supposed by the bystanders to be a demand for the reappearance of his Matilda—especially as he stretched out his white and wasted hand as if to have it clasped in hers."

I cannot go on any more. My feelings overpower me; but to speak plainly, Matilda is a nuisance in the sickroom. Now I am getting used to Lady Ellesmere; but if I were to tell the honest truth, I should prefer being nursed by Peter Robinson, my old clerk, to anybody in the world. Peter does not mind one's fractiousness. Scold Peter ever so much about the gruel, and he would only move up and down his bushy eyebrows and wink at you, as much as to say, "You are very tiresome; but I don't mind it a bit." Now Lady Ellesmere would go and cry—Yes, my dear, you know you would—and would never recognise the fact that an invalid is a tiresome, querulous, irritable, unreasonable being.

No : as the hero of the novel, I take my stand upon this. I will go to a picnic ; I will be tumbled out from a boat ; I will be dispossessed of my property ; I will spring into full success at one bound ; I will have a brain-fever ; but I will not be nursed by the young woman that I keep company with. Don't talk to me about Richard Swiveller and the Marchioness. The Marchioness was accustomed to squalidity and misery ; but my Matilda has been brought up in the best circles, and I cannot be plagued with her in a sick room.

*Johnson.* I will be merciful, Sir John. You shall not be plagued with Matilda when you have a brain-fever.

*Ellesmere.* I could go on throughout the whole evening, cutting down the incidents which form the ordinary staple of modern novel-writers. For example, I would insist that when the novel-writer has brought eight or ten characters upon the scene, he shall not contrive their movements in such a way as that whether the hero or heroine remain in England, or go to Australia, or to India, he or she shall always find himself or herself surrounded by the same people.

Now I have said enough, I think, to show that if I could eliminate these foolish and unreasonable accidents and incidents, we should have no more three-volume novels ; and by the time I had lived through my eight hundred and sixty-three years, all fiction would be so much like fact that there would be no more occasion for any biographers or historians ; and if that would not increase the happiness of the world, I do not know what would.

But I have not done yet. I should devote myself greatly to instructing the people in the arts of reading and writing. In the course of 800 years I should persuade the English

to open their mouths, and speak plainly. This would be a grand improvement.

Then, as to writing, I would insist upon everybody being able to write clearly. I am "lost in astonishment,"—do you know that phrase of Milverton's which he is so fond of, and also that other one of "humanity shudders when it contemplates?" Well, I am going to borrow them both for the occasion. I say that I am "lost in astonishment" at the audacity of people who write letters to me which I cannot read. And "humanity shudders when it contemplates," or at least it ought to "shudder when it contemplates," how very badly, all over the world, it writes. It is all the fault of that villain who invented a fine up-stroke.

There have been one or two sneers at my having mentioned only small matters. Did you hear that I meant to put down the bores in the House of Commons? Do you call that a small thing? Why, all the other things I should accomplish in the first 300 years; and the remaining 500 I should devote to putting down bores and sending up balloons. Not easy matters, either of them; but still, I believe, within the reach of human power.

*Sir Arthur.* You said something about reforming dress, Ellesmere?

*Ellesmere.* Yes; the lion should have his mane again.

*Cranmer.* I haven't a conception what he means.

*Ellesmere.* Why, that the male creature should dress well.

*Mrs. Milverton.* But what about us?

*Ellesmere.* My dear Blanche, I should devote thirty solid years to your improvement; and, in the course of those thirty years, I should institute two such great reforms in your nature, that I should make you all both perfectly lovable and perfectly lovely.

I should make each woman not to be afraid of all other women. They are to fear us, and not their own sex—consequently a woman should not be ashamed of going out five times following to parties in the same dress, if the dress were becoming, and pleased her husband, her brother, or her lover.

*Lady Ellesmere.* The second great reform?

*Ellesmere.* I should develop vanity amongst women—personal vanity—which seems now to be so dead amongst them.

*Sir Arthur.* I have always prided myself upon having the greatest admiration for women, and never uttering any foolish sneer against them; but Sir John goes far beyond me. I did imagine, I dare say without due thought, that they had vanity enough.

*Ellesmere.* No, no, Sir Arthur, you are quite mistaken. Each woman sacrifices her own personal appearance to the conceits of fashion—whereas, when I had properly developed every woman's personal vanity, she would only think how she could dress herself in the manner that would be most becoming to her. At present, they are all sadly deficient in a care for their own especial beauties.

*Mrs. Milverton.* There is a great deal of truth in what Sir John says.

*Ellesmere.* I believe there is, but I have yet a great deal more to say.

I would make everything in the way of festivity shorter and earlier. Balls should begin at eight o'clock in the winter, and nine in the summer. Dinners should never last more than two hours, concerts be abridged by one hour. There should never be performed more than one play at a time. As for evening parties, unless they are

very much improved in the course of these 900 years, I shall abolish them altogether.

At remote railway stations, I shall have lending libraries. Is there anything more suicidal in its tendency than having to wait at one of these stations for two mortal hours?

Now I come to what I suppose you will call a great thing, as if the things I have just proposed were little things! I shall do away with the adulteration of food and drugs. I believe I could do that now, with my present term of life, if I could only get one or two clever young members of Parliament to back me, and get up the facts, leaving me to see how the matter could be dealt with legally.

*Milverton.* This is really good, Ellesmere.

*Ellesmere.* Now I don't take that as any compliment—just as if the other things were not good!

Why, man! do you suppose that there are not as many lives injured or lost by ill-managed festivity as even by the adulteration of food? And recollect this, that I mean to take care of the recreation of the poor, and not allow them to bolt down their beer and their spirits without tempering it with plenty of real recreation—open air, music, dancing, quoits, bowls, and cricket; and for quiet people, like Milverton, dominoes, backgammon, and whist.

I shall set my face against hurry.

Lastly, I shall put down parentheses, snub fine writing of all kinds, and make people say what they have to say in clear, distinct sentences, with a proper nominative, verb, and accusative; and nobody shall use words of which he does not understand the meaning; consequently, the words "objective" and "subjective" will be banished from the language.

I have said my say.



*Sir Arthur.* I must sum up, for I have noted down the great labours which Ellesmere purposes for himself in these 863 years.

You will observe that three-fourths of them have reference to getting rid of something tiresome, and indicate the natural wishes of a man who, unhappily for himself in this tiresome world, is easily bored.

He would abolish the penny post, disinvent the telegraph, silence bell-ringing, stop the growth of great cities, build a good house, reform dress (chiefly by making women more vain), abolish lawyers and substitute notaries, reduce armies 999 per 1000, send lecturers on practical subjects throughout the country, put down bores in the House of Commons and set up balloons, crush all jealousy, do away with after-dinner speeches, reduce all three-volume novels to one volume, make everybody write well, make everything in the way of recreation shorter and earlier, prevent the adulteration of food, provide lending libraries at remote stations, set his face against hurry, and put down parentheses.

Goodly work, all of it! Let us hope that he will make a beginning of some of this work during his natural lifetime.

*Ellesmere.* One thing more! My afterthoughts are, perhaps, the best of my thoughts. I will have it declared, absolutely and finally, that this nation does not undertake to protect missionaries who go into distant countries with which we have no settled diplomatic relations.

Great will be the joy of the Three per Cents, as Sydney Smith would say, when I have brought the nation to this most needful resolve.

More last words! I have a brilliant idea. Indeed I am as full of ideas as an egg is of meat.

I told you that I should make a small London for mili-

tary purposes, out of London—on Wimbledon Common, I think. Well, I shall remove most of the London statues to that small town. If the enemy should be of an æsthetic turn of mind, and should gain entrance into the town, they will be so disgusted, horrified, and amazed by these statues that they will fall an easy prey to our troops. On the other hand, if they should survive the shock, and take the town, they will carry off the statues as trophies taken from the barbarians. (At any rate, we shall get rid of the statues from London proper.

Now, is it not desirable that I should have this long life, which Milverton and Sandy are kind enough to arrange for me, if only to effect this grand reform?

I end with what I began with—that Milady must not have this length of life too. You know women are so persevering, and so one idea'd. Men can be bored out of anything. I do feel that if you gave her the same vitality as I am to have, it would be Lady Ellesmere, and not Sir John, who would govern the world. And I leave you to guess how it would then be governed. Eventually, she would put down smoking, and take away from the male part of the human race the chief element of consolation—the one thing which enables men to bear their troubles with an equal mind.

Our conversation had now lasted so long that it was getting towards evening, and the gong began to sound for dressing. Mr. Mauleverer, who had hitherto been silent, now burst out with the exclamation,—“Oh, what dinners we should have, if Sir John could rule us for eight hundred and sixty-three years! What a pretty idea that was of his to send about the

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country consummate cooks as lecturers. But humanity, as I have always told you, is a poor creature. And even in the greatest characters,—Sir John's, for instance,—there are sad defects and shortcomings. The remarks he made about edible fungi were those of a man, comparatively speaking, small-minded, prejudiced, and ignorant."

We all laughed at Mr. Mauleverer's enthusiasm, and then separated to dress for dinner.

## CHAPTER XV.

I AM so anxious to get on with the story of Realmah that I do not like to interrupt it by the account of long conversations. I cannot help, however, giving a part of a conversation which occurred when we assembled together to hear a reading. Sir John Ellesmere had been propounding one of his favourite maxims; namely, that all vice is but dulness.

*Ellesmere.* Not idleness, you know; but dulness. How often the word dull could advantageously be substituted for wicked, or malicious, or cruel, or criminal! Many a puffy, fluffy sentence of historians might be most advantageously abridged if they would but use the right words. I will give an instance.

An historian of the Huns, a learned Hun, not known to many people, but much studied by me, writes as follows of Attila:—"The great King's disposition, which, even in his earliest years, could not have been accounted as humane and forbearing as that of other Huns, was now exacerbated by the impertinent and unwarrantable resistance which had been opposed to his victorious and civilizing arms by the inhabitants of Verona, Mantua, and Brescia: he felt that

the power he had gained by unsparing vigour might be lost by the exercise of a mercy that would have been considered weakness : religious controversy, in the course of which a fanatic Christian had dared to suggest that the great King was the scourge of God, had not sweetened his temper, or soothed his suspiciousness : moreover, the number of his prisoners embarrassed and delayed his progress ; and accordingly Attila resolved to put them all to the sword."

Now, I should merely say, Attila was dull that day ; and, wanting something to amuse him, ordered a general slaughter of the prisoners.

*Sir Arthur.* What an historian is lost to the world in this great lawyer ! But what is your remedy, Ellesmere, for dulness ?

*Ellesmere.* Oh, inducing men to take an interest in what you would call little things ; in cultivating all manner of small pursuits—that is, if they cannot be persuaded to take up great ones. A man who loves his garden, and works in it, is sure to be a less dull, and therefore a better man, than other men who have no such pursuit. This is a very commonplace remark ; but it is true.

*Milverton.* I quite agree with you.

*Ellesmere.* I don't believe that any of you see the full force of what I mean. Calumny, ill-nature, malice—all the minor vices, which, however, give so much pain to the world, are merely functions, to use a mathematical phrase, of dulness.

Now, suppose I were to die suddenly. I might easily do so of irritable over-yawning some day in the House of Commons, or at the Bar. In the — case, that fellow Wordall spoke consecutively for three days—his speech in all exceeding fourteen hours, when it might easily have

been made in one and a half. I had to listen, because I had to reply to the fellow, and I declare to you I might have expired then and there, from suppressed irritability.

Well, I die. Now I do believe I am not an unpopular fellow, and that a good many men rather like me than not; but their first feeling would be of satisfaction at something having happened that interested them, that they could go home and tell their wives: "My dear, such a sad thing has happened; Sir John Ellesmere is dead—and suddenly. You've heard of him, of course? He was Leonard Milverton's great friend. A much cleverer fellow, by the way, as people, who knew them both, have often told me! There was always some good saying of his floating about the world. He was the man who said that the greatest humbug of all humbugs is the pretending to despise humbugs."

"Poor fellow, I am afraid he had a sad time of it with Milady! You have only to look at her face to see that she has a temper of her own. A *nez* does not become *retroussé* by internal *angelic* influences." (Don't hit me, Lady Ellesmere. Milverton, you should protect your guests against battery and assault.)

Now this heartlessness about my death; this just but depreciatory view of poor Milverton; this painful truthfulness about poor Lady Ellesmere,—all of it is the result, not of ill-nature, but of dulness. Dulness it is that creates the momentary unkindness. The same thing with calumny; people calumniate because they are dull; in nine times out of ten they do not mean any harm!

*Sir Arthur.* Moralist as well as historian! We shall never come to the end of Ellesmere's powers. But what pursuit have you got, Sir John, which always prevents you from being dull, and therefore malicious?

*Lady Ellesmere.* Why, don't you know, Sir Arthur? Perhaps, though, you thought the other day, when my amiable husband talked about setting up balloons, he was joking. Would that it were so! There is a back room in our house in town, where knocking and hammering, and screwing and pasting, and warming and cooling, and gas-burning, are constantly going on. He and his clerk—for they are both bitten with the same mania—shut themselves up in that room for hours; and it is as much as my place is worth to disturb them. Sometimes, when things are going well with them, I am kept awake through the small hours of the night to hear all about the machine, which is to combine lightness with strength and with power, and is to enable us all to be aëronauts. Truth, not dulness, compels me to say that my husband has all other demerits known in the human character but that of dulness—that is, dulness for himself, because he can make other people dull by being so eminently disagreeable.

*Sir Arthur.* I think you are paid off, Ellesmere, for what you have made your friends say about Lady Ellesmere; but if we once get into recriminations of this kind, we shall never have the reading: so please, Milverton, begin.

*Ellesmere.* Stay a bit. I must say more. I want to show you how benevolent my view of dulness makes me. When I hear that any man has been speaking ill of me behind my back, I am not angry with him, but I merely say to myself, "How dull he must have been to have had nothing better to do!" I long to address to him an oration in the form of a single sentence, the outlines of which I have often imagined, and talked over to myself. The gracious Milverton was good enough, as you will perhaps remember,

to tell me, patronisingly, that some sentence I uttered some time ago was not so bad.

*Lady Ellesmere.* Take breathing time, John. I wonder, by the way, whether ears can take hearing time; for, if so, we must all prepare for John's oration, which is to be compressed into one grand, full (perhaps we may say overflowing) sentence.

*Ellesmere.* Yes, my dear, prepare; for it is always a difficult thing for a woman to listen for any time to anything that is well worth hearing.

I should take my dull maligner aside (probably it would be in Westminster Hall), tell him I had heard what he had said of me—prove to him that it was not my demerit, but his dulness, which had caused him to speak in that manner of me; and should then address him thus:—

“What, dull! when you do not know what gives its loveliness of form to the lily, its depth of colour to the violet, its fragrance to the rose; when you do not know in what consists the venom of the adder any more than you can imitate the glad movements of the dove; when, unlike the wisest of monarchs and of men, far from knowing trees as he did, ‘from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall,’ you do not know anything even of the two extremes of Solomon's great knowledge in this behalf; and when even these crushed syringa<sup>1</sup> leaves might form a subject for you to investigate, which, for the remainder of your natural

<sup>1</sup> Lady Ellesmere afterwards told us that Sir John was passionately fond of the syringa, and that she had made an arrangement for a gardener who comes to Covent Garden to supply her with flowers and leaves from this shrub, which, as she said, she sometimes gave her husband when he was good.



life, should save you from dulness :—what, dull ! when the all-pervading forces and powers of chemistry are unknown to you ; when light, heat, electricity, are mere words to you, clad with no more ideas for you than they are for that boy who is whistling as he goes along, unmindful, nay unconscious, of the beauty and grandeur of this glorious building :—what, dull ! when earth, air, and water are all alike mysteries to you ; and when, as you stretch out your hand, you do not touch anything the properties of which you have mastered ; while, all the time, Nature is inviting you to talk earnestly with her, to understand her, to subdue her, and to be blessed by her :—what, dull ! when you have not travelled to the ends of the earth, and have not seen what your forefathers, the mighty men of old—some of whom were not dull men—have formed, and built, and restrained, and vanquished :—what, dull ! when you have travelled over so few minds, and have not read the hundred great books of the world—for there have been at least a hundred books written by men who were not dull, and whose works fulfil the words of Samson, when he went down to Timnath to take a wife from among the Philistines, and found that which, as he said, combined leonine strength with honied sweetness :—what, dull ! when you know nothing of the niceties of theology, the subtleties of metaphysics, the closeness of logic, the completeness of mathematics, the intricacies, and withal the beauties, of jurisprudence and of law :—dull, you say ; and you know nothing, comparatively nothing, of the long, finely-woven chain-work of history, telling you, as best it can, of the innumerable tribes of men who have fought and bled—sinned, suffered, and rejoiced—even as we are now doing, in these which are rashly denominated the later ages :—

what, dull ! when Art divine, whether expressed in painting, in sculpture, or in architecture, is a thing which, even when you admire it, you ignorantly gaze at, as the heathens at Athens ignorantly worshipped their, 'Unknown God ;'— what, dull ! when there are thousands, nay millions of human beings, at least as worthy as yourself (ay, and poor animals too ; for God only knows how much they need care, and what a burden lies upon our souls for our conduct to them), some of whom might be aided, cheered, improved, invigorated, soothed, by the smallest deed or word of sympathy on your part. Go away, man ; learn something, do something, understand something ; and let me hear no more of your dulness condensing itself into malignity."

*Sir Arthur.* I think I see the poor man dazed and amazed by Ellesmere's torrent of grand words, and passing the remainder of his life, not in the expression of dull malignity, but in the vain endeavour to recall Ellesmere's sentence. By the way, is it not droll to see that he brought in, unconsciously, one or two legal phrases, such as, "in this behalf"—"Solomon's knowledge in this behalf?"

*Mauleverer.* It was a full and gorgeous sentence. Ellesmere would be a grand fellow if he were not so disagreeable sometimes.

*Lady Ellesmere.* When ? How ? Where ? Never to anybody, Mr. Mauleverer, but to me ; and he has a right to be so to me, if he please.

*Milverton.* Don't be angry, Mildred. Mauleverer only said that to tease you ; and, as the vulgar say, to get "a rise" out of you.

*Lady Ellesmere.* I am much obliged to him, I am sure.

*Ellesmere.* Now then, Milverton, you may proceed.

After a great effort of mind, one can never stoop to answer small criticisms.

*Milverton.* I will proceed : but after one of these grand flights of Ellesmere's, which occur about two or three times a year, I really am ashamed to read to you my poor, slow, dull, creeping, crawling sentences.

[The reading was then continued.]

## The Story of Realmah.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### THE SHAM FIGHT.

IN the embroidered language of the Sheviri (and all people in the beginning of their education are fond of this embroidery), a hundred times since the last day of the siege had the celestial maiden who adorns the heavens grown up from delicate childhood to the full beauty of womanhood, when we are again called to look upon the town of Abibah.

Very different was it from that town as it might have been beheld on the day succeeding the siege. It had greatly increased both in size and beauty. Its new foundations had been made much more substantial ; and the buildings placed upon them were of a much more enduring character than those which had been consumed in the great fire. That part of the

town, however, which had not suffered from fire remained unaltered, and Realmah still continued to occupy his palace in that quarter.

Most men hate details, and it is a delightful thing for the historian and the novelist, as well as for their readers, that they can judiciously pass over details ; and, as in dramatic writing, bring a fresh scene before you without tiresome explanations as to what had occurred in the interval between that scene and the previous one commemorated.

It was early on a beautiful morning that Realmah came forth from his palace, accompanied by many courtiers and attendants. He was much altered in appearance. He walked with greater difficulty, and his face was deeply marked with the long furrows ploughed in by that sedulous husbandman, Care. He was more richly dressed than he had formerly been, but the old habit of carelessness was still strong upon him, so that his clothes seemed to be huddled on anyhow.

As he descended the steps of the palace, he tripped and nearly fell, whereupon a courtier, who—though a courtier—knew but little of human nature, rushed forward to assist the King ; which assistance Realmah waved away with a gesture of petulance, for great people do not like to be thought failing in strength, and do not approve of being publicly assisted.

Joy and excitement sat upon the faces of all the people of Abibah that morning—on all, at least, but

that of the King ; and he seemed not unhappy, but only anxious.

A large historical work might be written to commemorate the proceedings of Realmah during these waxings and wanings of the celestial goddess by whose movements they chiefly measured time. There is, however, so much material for history in the world, that there are long periods abounding in great transactions which are obliged to be chronicled in a few sentences ; and every day the need for compression in historical narrative becomes greater.

This day was the day of the year on which a festival was held to commemorate the last day of the siege, when the greater part of the city was consumed by fire, and when the men of the North were driven away.

Hitherto this festival had been celebrated in a commonplace way—by games, feasts, and illuminations ; but to-day a much more striking mode of commemorating the great event was to be adopted. The scene was to be acted over again, without, of course, the accompaniment of fire ; but there were to be parties of besieged and besiegers ; in short, a mock fight. The King had with great difficulty been induced to give his consent to this mode of celebration.

He had been inclined to remind his people of a very ancient proverb which had much meaning in it, and ran thus, "*In the games there are no two sons of the same mother,*" intimating that even in playful contest all the ties of brotherhood are forgotten. The

King, however, restrained himself from saying this, by thinking of another proverb, "*Why tell him that his two eyes look two different ways?*" meaning, it is no good telling people of evils which they cannot cure.<sup>1</sup>

Still, Realmah did not like the idea of this mimic fight, and was not by any means sure that it would not lead to serious consequences; the more so as he had detected some unwillingness to serve in those young men to whom it had fallen by lot to play the part of the besiegers. However, they all looked very happy on this bright morning, for the spirits of people are always raised when they put on their best clothes.

Iron weapons had been brought to a great state of perfection, but these were not allowed to be used on the present occasion, except by the King's guard, who were not to take any part in the action.

During the earlier part of the day everything went well; but, after some hours of struggle, men's tempers began to be irritated; and what annoyed the besiegers greatly was the part which the women took in the fight, both in jeering at them, and also in throwing down upon them glutinous masses made from the gums of trees, which caused very severe contusions.

It was in the new market-place that the sham fight raged most furiously. The time came when the

<sup>1</sup> Though the best proverbs are common to all nations, we find something peculiar in the proverbs of each nation. For instance, this was a favourite proverb of the Sheviri which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere—"Do not turn round sharply lest you catch them laughing at you."

leaders of the besieging force were to give the signals for retreat ; but some of them, especially the younger ones, refrained from giving the appointed signals, and the common soldiers were so excited that those orders which were given by the older officers were not attended to. In short, the fight at this point became a real one.

Realmah, wearied with the day's proceedings, and seeing that, as far as he had observed, nothing unpleasant had occurred, had retired to his palace, when news was brought to him that the worst he had anticipated was occurring.

Hastily summoning his guards, he rushed to the market-place and into the thickest of the fray. Before the combatants were thoroughly aware of his presence, he had received two wounds, one in the arm and one in the thigh ; and several people were either slain or much injured by the royal guards in their endeavour to protect the fallen King.

At last the tumult was allayed, and Realmah was carried back on a litter to his palace.

For some time he was insensible, for he was a man very sensitive to the effects of pain ; but, to the astonishment of the Varnah and of all the bystanders, when the medicine-men had dressed his wounds, he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and was heard to mutter to himself many times, " There never was anything so fortunate."

Throughout the city that evening it was generally reported and believed that the King was delirious.

The shame and vexation of the men of Abibah were unutterable; as also their fears, for they feared that they would never be forgiven by their King.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### REALMAH'S GREAT PROJECT.

THEY erred, indeed, who thought that the words of the King, which had expressed his joy, and declared his good fortune, in having been wounded, were the words of delirium. Never had Realmah been more sane than when, with laughter, he had uttered those words; for he saw in that occurrence an additional means of carrying into action a project which, from his earliest years, had been very near to his heart.

He was one of those men who, even when not gifted with genius, or with manifold talents, yet have their way in the world, simply because they never become tired of their projects.

What chance have ordinary men against such men as these? The ordinary man, after he has said his say a few times, begins to be tired of that saying. If he is a person of any refinement, he becomes ashamed of so much repetition. He seeks to clothe his idea, even if he maintains it, in new words; and at last, perhaps, he varies, not only the expression, but the substance of his idea. Now, the world of thought is



a thing which requires to be penetrated by constant hammering in the same place. What would be thought of the woodman who became tired or ashamed of driving his axe into the one cutting which he had begun to make in the tree? It would be a long time before that tree would be felled, if it had only such an inconstant woodman to attack it.

In a neighbouring territory, belonging to a people called the Azarees, there was a narrow strip of land which was occupied by a fortress belonging to the Sheviri. Some generations past, the Sheviri had conquered the Azarees; and, after the conquest, had held this strip of land, and built this fortress, as a means of keeping the Azarees in a kind of subjection, and also of controlling all the tribes on the lake which had to pass that way, as it was in the nature of a defile which had to be passed by many peoples.

From his earliest years, bred up in government in the house of his uncle, Realmah had been much accustomed to listen to the talk of statesmen and ambassadors. The silent, reserved boy had heard the old statesmen of his nation gloat over the fact that this fortress was a thorn in the side of all their enemies, and even of their allies. He had also noticed what a bitter subject of complaint the existence of this fortress had often been with the ambassadors from foreign tribes. Without daring to breathe a word of what he thought, the studious boy had come to a conclusion totally different from his elders, and had even, at the age of fourteen, resolved, that if ever he

should come to power, he would win the hearts of all the nations of the lake by abolishing, in time of peace, this obnoxious fortress.

He *had* come to power ; and the resolve of his boyhood was as much fixed in his mind as ever. With that patient sagacity, however, which was so striking a part of his character, he waited for some time before he even dared to broach to his wise favourite, the court jester, the strange idea which beset him. Not from the jester even, not from any of his most intimate friends, did he at first win a single word of encouragement for his great project. They had not in their vocabulary the word "romantic," or they would have used it ; but they had the word "starlight," which they used in the same sense as we use moonshine, signifying something which is unreal, which pretends to be warm, and is not. There was not a soul to whom Realmah at first confided his great project who did not intimate to him that his idea was starlight. Even the Ainah, to whom he told it first, had but said in answer, "If all men were like my Realmah, it would be well to be so generous ; but there are none like him." And Realmah sighed, for the fondness of her words did not console him for the absence of her sympathy with him in this his dearest project.

The way in which his proposition was received by three or four of his principal councillors may well illustrate the difficulties with which Realmah had to contend. When he did at last broach the matter to

the court jester, that great functionary, as was natural, conveyed his views chiefly by means of a fable.

He said that of course the great king, who was not only the greatest but the most learned man in his dominions, must know the old fable about "the good-natured Otlocol."

"That magnificent but fearful creature, the Otlocol, was wont in former days to hold long conversations with mankind; and the particular Otlocol in question would often walk about the ancient streets of Abibah.

"One day a friend of his, a man, said, 'My good Otlocol, why do you take such trouble in getting your food, being up all night sometimes, as I hear, to hunt after the poor reindeer?'<sup>1</sup> If you would but allow me just to break off the ends of those two formidable teeth of yours, and pare your front claws a little, everybody would be delighted to partake their food with you. But now, good-natured as you are, people are a little afraid of you. *Then*, even the little children would share their crusts with you.'

"The good-natured Otlocol, always ready to believe what his friends told him, consented. The teeth were broken, and the nails were pared, by his kind friend. But somehow or other, from that day forth, the Otlocol grew thinner and thinner. He did not, after all, find so many people ready to share their bones and their crusts with him. He was no longer interest-

<sup>1</sup> The reindeer in those times came as far south as the Swiss lakes, as may be seen from the bones that have been exhumed from the bottom of those lakes.

ing, now that he could not do anybody any harm ; and, in the end, the poor animal died of starvation.

"That is all your poor jester has to say, my prince, to your magnanimous proposal."

The next person that Realmah tried was Llama-Mah. That courtier was dismayed. He had never yet disagreed with the King ; but there are bounds to everything, and even Llama-Mah could not give his approbation to the surrender of this fortress. But though he could not assent, he could flatter ; and, after a few minutes' silence, he said to Realmah : "The King is always wise and judicious ; but I have observed sometimes that his wisdom takes a higher flight upon the second discussion of any great subject than that which it did on the first."

Realmah knew full well what a decided negative was most unwillingly conveyed by Llama-Mah in these flattering words.

Not daunted, however, he resolved to lay the question before Lariska. Here there was not so fatal and immediate a negative, for Lariska was always delighted to discuss anything ; but he had so many ingenious things to say against the proposition, as well as some few things for it, that Realmah felt more disheartened by his discourse than by that of either of the others.

The next day the King broached the matter to Londardo. Now, as we know, Londardo was one of those men who think that the reasons for, or against, anything, are about equal, and that the main

object in this world's affairs is to adopt some course, and to keep consistently to that. After listening carefully to Realmah's explanation of his project, Londardo looked very grave; and, to Realmah's astonishment, asked for two days' delay before he should say anything at all about the matter.

When those two days had elapsed, Londardo waited upon the King. Without any preamble he said, "It is a great idea, and I should be for its adoption if only we could, from this moment, act consistently with the continuous generosity that such a plan demands. It will not do to be conquering here, and giving up the results of conquest there. For example, you had thought of punishing the disobedience of the Malquas—that must be abandoned, and you must give them the option of refusing all allegiance to you. From all quarters there must come, at the same time, reports of your generosity and of your unwillingness to place a yoke upon any new tributaries.

"Public affairs differ from private affairs only in largeness; and, if you observe, the effect of great forbearance and generosity in dealing with private individuals, breaks down solely because you do not go far enough. You keep up some restriction, or maintain some advantage; and, in doing this, you retain as much odium as if you had maintained all your advantages, and kept up all your restrictions. I will vote as you wish me in the council, provided you will, from that time, be consistent in a course of complete generosity."

This conversation took place in the early days of

Realmah's reign. Londardo, as we have seen, was slain by the Northmen; and bitterly did the King mourn over the loss of such a counsellor—especially in regard to this great project.

It is not needful to give in detail the constant efforts made, both in council and out of council, by Realmah to win over his chief friends and councillors. Suffice it to say, however, that gradually he did win them over.

I do not think he would have been able to do so, but that this project of abandoning the fortress called Ravala-Mamee was consistent with the rest of Realmah's policy, which had proved eminently successful. The older councillors were astounded when they found that embassies came to Realmah, absolutely offering him a kind of suzerainty over nations that had hitherto been in no manner whatever connected with the Sheviri.

These councillors began to see that there really is such a thing as the power of love, as well as the power of hatred. Oh, if Realmah had but been blessed with such a religion as Christianity in his time, what a difference there might have been in the aspect of the world!

The councillors had been at last convinced of the wisdom of Realmah's policy, but they dreaded its being put forth to the people. Year after year they had persuaded the King to postpone the announcement of his intentions, always using the common phrase of statesmen in all ages and in all nations, that the time was not ripe for it; *as if the time were ever ripe for the utterances of a great man—as if he did not create the time!*

It may appear surprising to the hearers of this tale that these secret conferences of Realmah with his friends and his councillors on this important subject, lasting as these conferences did for so many years, never became known to his people, nor even to the inhabitants of Abibah. This fact was in direct contradiction to a celebrated proverb, or rather trilogy of proverbs, said to have been made by the King himself.

It is this—*The dragon-fly told the bee a secret: the whole hive of bees knew it that evening.*

• *The dragon-fly told another dragon-fly the secret: for three whole days it remained a secret.*

*The dragon-fly told the lark the secret: the lark soared up to heaven and did not think much of the dragon-fly's secret: the other larks never knew it.*

This proverb, naturally a kingly one, meant: "Trust equals a little: inferiors not at all: superiors (that is, me the King) thoroughly."

Now, Realmah had not been betrayed by these inferiors to whom he had trusted the great secret. But the reason why it had never been betrayed was evidently this—that each man who knew it, feared that he might be considered by the common people as a traitor to his country, if he knew of such a project, and had not at once put his veto upon it.

It was as if, in the times of Louis XIII. of France, a man should have been known to have had correspondence with the Court of Spain.

This will show the dangers and the difficulties

which Realmah had to encounter in the execution of this great design. In truth, for the last twenty years he had maintained this project at the risk of his throne, and even of his life.

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*Milverton.* I do not think that I am especially timid or nervous on ordinary occasions of speaking or talking. I feel what I suppose all people feel when they have to make a speech. One's heart beats a little faster for a few minutes before the time, and one feels that, on this particular occasion, one is sure to make a failure of it. But when I have got through my first sentence, and have looked into the eyes of my audience, I am seldom troubled by any further embarrassment.

So, in talking: I never feel nervous or uncomfortable, except when I have to explain something, or to argue about something, that will require a certain portion of time to be given to it, and which time I know my auditors will not, or cannot give. One becomes very nervous then.

*Cranmer.* That is a very frequent case. I have often felt it myself.

*Ellesmere.* Probably; but proceed, Milverton, with what you were going to say.

*Milverton.* Well, I was going to say that to-day I am in a permanent state of nervousness, which has almost hitherto been unknown to me.

I feel that you are to a certain extent representative men. If I fail in persuading any of you, I know that I have no chance with the world in general.

Of course, you see what I have been aiming at, and why



I have written the story of Realmah. I do not care at all about your saying that mine has been an inartistic mode of proceeding—namely, the writing of a story with a purpose. It is my way of doing the thing, and you must bear with it. At any rate you must own, that I have followed Goethe's great maxim of not talking away my interest in the subject. You have never heard me speak about it, and yet it has been in my mind for years.

*Ellesmere.* What a restraint the man must have put upon himself! It is just what my favourites, the dogs, do. They could talk well enough about the subjects nearest to their hearts, but they have read their Carlyle, and they know that stern purpose is gradually frittered away by idle talk.

*Milverton.* Now I want to discuss the matter most carefully with you; and you must allow me to commence the discussion. I should wish to divide my subject into five heads.

*Ellesmere.* Good heavens! this is becoming serious. I should like to tell you my experience about a sermon that was divided into five heads.

*Milverton.* Now, don't joke, Ellesmere.

*Ellesmere.* Sir Oliver Roundhead come again! who never laughed himself, nor ever permitted any of his family to laugh. But, indeed, I will be a thoroughly good boy, and as serious as the men who sell fish about the streets, for I have observed they never joke with their customers.

*Milverton.* (1) *The diminution of expense.* And to this branch of the subject I especially invite Mr. Cranmer's attention, reminding him of Tennyson's words,

“And that eternal want of pence  
Which vexes public men;”

which I know vexes him and Mr. Gladstone, and sundry other great financial authorities.

You, Sir Arthur, who love the works of the great Greek tragedians, will recollect that passage in the "Prometheus vinctus," in which Prometheus is exhorted to cease from his philanthropic ways. I have often thought how that applies to modern times. If Governments will indulge in philanthropic ways, they must be prepared for constantly increasing expense in this direction. For instance, if we are to go on taking care of the health and sanitary conditions of the people, the expenses of our Medical Department must go on increasing.

If we are to go on educating the people, the expenses of the Education Department must inevitably increase.

If we are to go on cultivating art and science amongst our people, the expenses of the Art and Science Department must also increase.

If we are to go on caring for the recreation of the people, there will be increased expense in this direction.

And, taking the Civil Service generally, considering that, under the new order of things, it will be required to be strengthened and added to, rather than to be reduced, and that of all men in this country, excepting country surgeons, the public servants are the worst paid, I do not see how we can hope for any reduction of expenditure under the heads I have just enumerated.

I stop here for the moment, and wish to know what Sir Arthur and Mr. Cranmer will say.

*Sir Arthur.* You are quite right, Milverton ; these philanthropic ways must not cease.

*Cranmer.* And I have no hope of reducing the Civil

Service estimates. That excellent man, Joseph Hume, did not look for much economy in that direction.

*Milverton.* Very good. Where, then, must we look for it? I answer, mainly in the naval, military, and colonial departments.

*Ellesmere.* Of course we all know that. So far the Court is with you.

*Milverton.* Now, I say that the way in which the expenses in those departments are to be reduced, *is not by diminishing expense over the whole surface generally, and so producing general weakness everywhere, but by totally doing away with the need for expense at certain fixed points.*

The above I hold to be a great maxim, applicable alike in private and in public affairs. Don't stint your wife and your children, and your servants and your horses, but do away with the carriage and horses at once, if you really cannot afford to keep it handsomely. Of course you see how I mean to apply this. The wisest political move in our time was the cession of the Ionian Islands. What was the expense to us annually, Cranmer, of the Ionian Islands?

*Cranmer.* Say 50,000*l.*

*Milverton.* May I ask you, Cranmer, what has been the expense to us of fortifying Alderney?

*Cranmer.* About 1,177,000*l.*

*Milverton.* What about Bermuda?

*Cranmer.* The cost incurred by Imperial Funds for the defence of Bermuda, in 1859-60, was, if I remember rightly, about 87,000*l.*

*Milverton.* And Gibraltar?

*Cranmer.* About 420,000*l.* for that year; and I do not think that was a heavy year.

*Milverton.* For the present I drop the question of expense. You are men of that degree of intelligence and knowledge of the world, that one need not bother you with details, and need only indicate to you a course of argument.

I am now going to the second branch of my subject.

(2) *The increase of prestige.* Mark you, I have not confined myself to any particular case. I do not choose to tell you whether Realmah's fortress of Ravala-Mamee means Gibraltar, or Malta, or Bermuda. I argue the case generally; and I say that that nation will gain greatly in prestige which first dares to do some great act of renunciation of the kind that I have intimated. Am I right in this?

*Sir Arthur.* I am with you.

*Cranmer.* I doubt.

*Mauleverer.* Dreams! Moonshine! Starlight!

*Ellesmere.* I should like the question to be more specific. The peculiar circumstances of the case would much affect my opinion.

*Milverton.* Well, then, I will be more specific. Suppose that we possess a fortress naturally belonging to another great nation, which nation this fortress menaces, discourages, and mortifies; and suppose that this great nation is one which is never likely to come into direct hostility with ourselves, and the amity of which great nation we should probably win by such an act of renunciation, what should you say then?

*Ellesmere.* I should say that it would be a grand thing to do; but I should wish to know whether this fortress might not be one which it would be important for us to hold in reference to our own military and naval movements,

and our possible hostility with other States. I think that is rather an ugly question, Master Milverton.

*Milverton.* It is ; but I shall be prepared to answer it in its proper place. I beg you to keep to the point, and to answer me, whether there would be any loss of prestige in such an act of renunciation as I propose ?

*Ellesmere.* No, there would not. Prestige is never lost by anything which indicates fearlessness——

*Sir Arthur.* And magnanimity.

*Ellesmere.* A thing may be very unwise, and yet not cause you to lose prestige.

*Milverton.* Very good. I now come to the third branch of the subject.

(3) *Safety for the State.* That safety, you may be sure, in the present condition of the means and appliances for warfare, depends upon the concentration of the powers and forces of the State.

The more you extend the line of possible attack by the enemy, the more you render yourself liable to be defeated at some point, which, though unimportant in itself, as a place to be guarded, is for the moment all-important to you, as being a part of your empire which you are bound to defend. A great empire cannot bear defeat anywhere. I might bring a host of metaphors and similes to illustrate this assertion, but every-day facts will perhaps do so better. You have to take the same care of some obscure British subject, if that man is unduly molested, as you have of your whole Indian dominions. What have you to say to this branch of the subject ?

*Cranmer.* I am with you.

*Sir Arthur.* So am I.

*Milverton.* The rest, I perceive, are silent.

*Ellesmere.* I do not like pledging myself. You see he is gradually getting us into his net. He has nearly gained an assent to three of his propositions, and I do not see what we may be led to. We must beware of letting ourselves be treated as the characters are in an imaginary dialogue. You have your Euphranor and Lycidas and Polyphrastes. Euphranor really represents the author, and the other fellows his opponents. Lycidas and Polyphrastes seem at first to come out very grandly and boldly; but anybody who is experienced in such writing easily discerns that the buttons are on their foils, while Euphranor's weapon is unguarded. I decline to be Polyphrastes.

I tell you what these unhappy characters always remind me of—the performing monkeys of a showman: the poor little creatures hop about gaily enough, but if, springing to the end of their tether, they struggle to get beyond it, the hard-featured showman jerks them back again, and makes them know their proper place, close to his barrel-organ. They are only to dance to his tunes, and are not to be indulged in caperings of their own.

Now, I am not going to be perverse or unreasonable. I will ultimately admit anything that I am convinced of; but I decline, as we go along, to make more admissions than I can help, so that it may not afterwards happen, that Polyphrastes having admitted this, and Polyphrastes having said that, Euphranor comes forth triumphantly, and shuts poor Polyphrastes up in a syllogism. We are not here to play our parts according to Milverton's bidding, but to argue out a very serious question seriously and guardedly.

*Milverton.* I proceed to Number 4.

(4) *The physical well-being of the community.*

This part of the subject has incidentally been treated

in Number 1, when we were considering the question of expense. All projected improvements tending to the physical well-being of the State are now met with the answer, "No funds."

But I have more to say about it. It is not only that funds are wanting; but time, attention, and forethought are wanting. Look what a lot of time and attention on the part of Ministers and Parliament is taken up by small questions concerning these petty dependencies.

This course of argument will apply to education as well as to physical well-being. The greatest things for our general well-being as a nation fail to have due thought given to them, because we are busied with all manner of details connected with possessions that are really of no use to us.

What do you say to all this?

*Mauleverer.* Are people any the happier for this physical well-being and for education? I doubt.

*Sir Arthur.* No, no, Mauleverer; you mustn't go into your usual course of depreciation of all human effort. We must keep close to the subject. For my part I have nothing to say against Milverton as regards this last branch of the subject.

*Cranmer.* Nor I. I know I never got sufficient attention to anything; and I believe that we, the British people, are distracted from the consideration of matters that most concern us, by a multiplicity of cares and troubles brought to us from afar.

*Milverton.* I am delighted to hear you say that, Cranmer. I may now proceed to the fifth branch of my subject.

(5) *The advancement and development of Christianity.* I have very little to say upon this head. If you do not feel

with me at once, I have no hope of persuading you by long arguments. I would just ask you, is it not most inconsistent to advocate the adoption of Christianity by individuals, and not to ask Governments to act upon principles which are essentially Christian?

You all regret and dread the perpetual increase of armaments in Europe. You admit the cruel and wicked expense of these armaments, the loss occasioned by which has lately been estimated at 178,000,000*l.* per annum, and you ask how on earth this great mischief is to be remedied?

I say that some one nation must make the first move, and why should not this nation be England?

At present it is an auction of folly. Each nation goes on bidding against the other. There is no end to it. It is like the conduct of ostentatious people, contending who shall make most show; and this kind of contest can only be ended by the absolute ruin of almost all the contending parties.

Now, what have you to say to my argument taken as a whole?

Here a curious thing occurred. There was a good deal of whispering between Sir John, Sir Arthur, and Mr. Cranmer; and then Sir John spoke.

*Ellesmere.* Whenever there is a rude thing to be done, I am the unlucky wight upon whom it falls to do it. We wish that our good host and hostess should take a little conjugal walk, arm in arm, to the fountain in the front garden, and there, reclining on the grass in sweet repose, should consider what they would give us for dinner to-morrow, while we make up our minds what we shall reply



to this elaborate talk of Milverton's. He has had time to prepare, and so must we.

Sandy must go too, because, though he is a good and trusty fellow, he so thoroughly belongs to the other camp, that we should be a little afraid of his presence.

*Sir Arthur.* Just write down for us, Milverton, the heads of your discourse.

Mr. Milverton did so, and left the paper with Sir Arthur. We then began to move away.

*Ellesmere.* Fairy stays with us.

But Fairy did not stay with them, but moved away slowly in our direction, in the odd fashion that a dog sometimes does, moving its hind legs like a rheumatic old gentleman, indicating a certain unwillingness to go—just what it does when told to go to its kennel, or to go to bed.

We went to the fountain, and I brought out some railway rugs for us to lie down upon. Mr. Milverton soon fell asleep, for he had been up half the night writing the last chapters. Thus half an hour passed. Afterwards we went into the study and worked. At length we were sent for, and when we had returned to them Sir Arthur began the conversation.

*Sir Arthur.* It was somewhat impertinent in us, Milverton, to send you and your wife and Mr. Johnson away, but we felt we could discuss the matter better without you, and settle amongst ourselves where the argument was weak, and where it was strong, and what we should finally resolve to say. I am to be the spokesman.

I have first the pleasure of informing you that you have made a convert in the person of Mr. Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* No, not exactly a convert. I assure you I had many of these ideas floating in my mind before; and now I only mean, that if I were obliged to vote to-day, I should vote with Milverton.

*Milverton.* I am delighted to hear it, Cranmer.

*Ellesmere.* Milverton does love anybody who agrees with him. That is the sure way to his heart. You have risen thirty-three and a half per cent. in his affections, Cranmer. I know you like exact calculations.

*Sir Arthur.* I now resume my office as your spokesman.

In the first place, we are all agreed, except Mauleverer, that philanthropic ways must not cease, and, in short, we agree with you in the main with regard to all you said about expense.

With regard to the increase of prestige, we do not seem to care much about it. We think, however, that you may be right in what you said.

With regard to safety for the State depending on the concentration of its powers and its forces, we thoroughly agree with you.

Here you must forgive me for a little interruption in the way of illustration that has occurred to me. You know the Highland saying, "Cut your talk with a little drink." So I say, even in the most serious discussion, the talk may be allowed to be cut with something that is either jocose or fanciful.

Is there any insect that has a particular enmity to the spider? I daresay there is; and, if we had your entomologist here, he would probably tell us all about this insect. I will call him the fly-friend. It is rather a

shame, by the way, to compare a great nation to a spider, but still I think you will say the illustration is a good one.

You have observed how spiders' webs are often formed with filaments thrown out to a great distance, the points of attachment being of great importance for the maintenance of the web.

My fly-friend comes and cuts one of these filaments at the furthest point. Before the spider can reach him, he has gone to another spot and cut the filament there; and before the irritated spider can reach his enemy, half the web is flapping helplessly down; for the damage to these distant points is as fatal as if the spider and the fly-friend had come to close quarters.

You may rely upon it that a great nation, with many distant dependencies, is as liable to mischief in this way as any spider's web.

*Milverton.* The illustration is admirable; but I think it all comes to be included in the saying of Napoleon, "That the art of war is the art of being strongest at a given time, at a given place." Now I just wish to ask you this ugly question, How are we to be strongest at a given time in Canada?

How few, even of our greatest statesmen, have given any indication that they are meditating deeply upon our colonial policy?

Johnson's story about his Spoolans had a great deal of meaning in it. There is next to no looking forward to prepare for great political emergencies.

*Sir Arthur.* I must resume.

With regard to what you said about the physical well-being of a state, we are agreed with you.

With regard to what you said about the advancement of Christianity, we are all of the same mind with you, except Mauleverer, who said that he had observed that the advancement of Christianity generally meant an increase in the number of clergymen and priests. He was not for that. Then he told us that the most malignant human being he had ever known was a parson. We did not see that this had much to do with the present subject, and we outvoted him.

*Milverton.* I scarcely know how to construe what I hear. You appear to have nothing to say against me; and yet you tell me I have only made one convert.

*Sir Arthur.* Lady Ellesmere is on the point of conversion.

*Ellesmere.* I think nothing of that. I do not mean to depreciate women: I am in a thoroughly serious mood to-day; but I knew beforehand that they would be sure to be with you. Your proposition has in it everything to please them. They like anything that looks great and magnanimous; and you are not to expect them to go into all the statesmanship of the matter.

*Sir Arthur.* I am afraid it is now my painful duty, as a schoolmaster would say when he is going to give a boy a whipping, to set before you, Milverton, the great objections that have occurred to us, and which prevent us from being converts, or at least keep us undecided.

Is not this matter for a congress? Should there not be something like give and take, in such affairs? Is our Ravala-Mamee to be given up for nothing? Would not more of what you would wish to be accomplished, be accomplished by making the question European instead of British?

These are grave questions, my friend.

*Milverton.* They are. I wish you had allowed me to be present while you were discussing this part of the subject. I shall merely reply by asking you in turn some grave questions.

Would there have been such a thing as free-trade in our time if we had waited until other nations had been convinced of the wise policy of freedom in trade?

Would slavery have been abolished by us if we had waited till other slave-holding nations had come to an agreement with us upon this point?

And, to take a recent instance, should we ever have ceded the Ionian Islands if we had made that cession a matter of European talk, and haggled about it with other nations?

*Sir Arthur.* I proceed to tell you further what we thought; and I am now really afraid that I shall have to say something very unpleasant, and which you will have great difficulty in getting over.

If any cession of the kind you imagine is to be made, it will have to be discussed in Parliament. You know how injudiciously they often talk there about foreign affairs, and how little power the Ministers have either in preventing or directing dangerous discussions of this kind. Now, the transaction which you mean to be a great and generous thing, winning you the love and amity of the nation to whom you make this cession, will be so belimed with disagreeable and injurious talk, that you are as likely to be hated as to be loved for what you do.

*Milverton.* This is a hard blow, I admit; but it is not a fatal one. Such a transaction as I contemplate will never take place without a great burst of generous enthu-

siasm, and there will be a great many noble as well as ignoble things said about it.

But take the worst: say that we do not win the amity of the nation to whom we cede any possession. Will this affect the surrounding nations? Will it make the act really less noble? Will it be the less an initiation of a great policy? And remember this, that some of the advantages I have held out, affect our own individual interests—such as diminution of expense, and concentration of forces.

*Sir Arthur.* I proceed. I am not to enter into discussion, but simply to tell you what we all thought and felt.

We felt, then, that we were not competent to decide upon such a question without having evidence of a military kind before us.

Of course you are not able to give us that; and we should not quite trust you if you were able to give it. We admit that there would probably be great prejudice from a military point of view against your proposal; but, whether that view is prejudiced or not, we must hear it before pledging ourselves, even in friendly talk, upon such a grave matter.

*Milverton.* I have nothing to say in reply on this head, or rather I have a great deal to say; but it must be said after your military views have been expressed, and when I should be able to call in counter-evidence. I could say a great deal from history, bearing upon this point.

*Ellesmere.* Yes, yes; of course you could. You are better up in such subjects than we are; and you would only give us the instances which are in your favour. I do not mean that you would be intentionally unfair; but, in the course of your reading, the historical examples which are

favourable to your own views would naturally have attracted your attention, and have retained the foremost place in your memory.

*Sir Arthur.* I will not allow discussion just yet. I must complete my statement.

We are afraid, Milverton, of being led away, or rather misled, by the consideration of some one of your projects—such as the giving up of a particular fortress. We see that it would be a great change in our imperial policy, especially as regards the colonies, if we were to consent to come over to your idea, and vote as you propose. We must look upon the thing as a whole. The power, influence, and reputation of a great nation are very delicate things. We are afraid, lest in touching some bit, we should derange the whole. In fact, to use an official word, we are not “prepared” to give our assent, however much or little it may be worth to your proposition. We admit that it is worthy of the most serious, the most anxious consideration. From this time forward we shall, no doubt, keep it in our minds, and find many things to bear upon it which may be either for you or against you. In fine, to talk after a parliamentary fashion, we shall not go into the lobby with you, nor will our names be found in the division list amidst your opponents; but we shall walk out before the end of the debate.

*Ellesmere.* A mode of action which, in general, I detest; but, in this particular case, I must hear a great deal more on both sides before I can come to any conclusion upon so grave a matter.

*Milverton.* I do not wish to say anything disrespectful, and I am very deeply obliged to you for the earnest attention you have given to this important subject; but I must remark that some of the arguments, or rather some of the

feelings—for it seemed to me rather sentiment than argument that Sir Arthur has just adduced—are such as have been brought forward to stop the way of every great reform. “Touch this, and what will become of that?” “Suppress here, and you will cause detriment there.” You must admit it is hard to meet these vague accusations.

Sir Arthur advised that we should sometimes cut our talk by something that was either jocose or fanciful; and, whilst he was speaking, I couldn’t help thinking of a proverb in vogue amongst the Sheviri :—

“The frog leapt from the bank into the water; and, making a little splash, said that he was so much afraid lest his friend, the pescara,<sup>1</sup> who ate up pike for him in the deep waters of the lake, should be troubled by it.”

*Ellesmere.* Now that won’t do, Milverton: it is very well meant, and very sarcastic, but it won’t do; for you begin by telling us that the leap of your frog was a most important plunge—the initiation of a new policy.

*Milverton.* Then I will give you another proverb which shall be more applicable. No: it shall not be a proverb, but a fable, which was a favourite with the Sheviri.

In the great wood where the Ramassa curves round the Bidolo-Vamah (I know that Ellesmere always makes fun of this bit of description) there dwelt two lions, occupying

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Milverton afterwards told me a droll proverb, or rather proverbial story, about the pescara and the frog. They are always supposed to be great friends. The story is this: “The pike had hold of the frog’s leg; the pescara came up and swallowed both of them. As the frog was being swallowed he protested against this breach of friendship. Upon which the pescara said, ‘It is a pity, but how is it I find you in such bad company?’” The story used politically to intimate that a small State cannot get into relation with a larger State, even that of hostility, without partaking of its troubles.



respectively the north-east and south-west corners of the wood.

This was in the time when lions and men were very friendly, and often had good talk together.

Both of these lions had scratched out with their powerful fore-claws deep pitfalls near and afar from their respective caves.

These pitfalls troubled the poor men very much when they came to gather beech-mast in the woods. So they said to the lions, whom they met walking out together one fine day in the woods, "These holes that you make everywhere are a great trouble to us; and we have lost some of our people in them. Please fill them up, that friendship may abide between us."

And the lions said that they would consider about it; and, after the men had gone, they reasoned together, but could not agree.

The lion of the south-west, calling all his friends of the forest together, did fill up these pitfalls: the other lion remained sullen and obdurate.

Now there came a great drought in the land; and the lions, drinking filthy water, fell sick, and the little lions were at death's door.

Then the men sent their chief medicine-man to the good lion, who restored him and his young lions to their full strength; but the other lion lost his lioness and his young cubs, and became more gloomy and ferocious than ever.

*Ellesmere.* But there was a time when war did break out between men and lions, and what happened then?

*Milverton.* That is exactly what I was going to tell you.

War did break out between men and the lions; and the suspicious lion, flying from a band of armed men who were

too strong for him, fell into one of his pitfalls far away from his cave, the existence of which he had forgotten ; and he died miserably of starvation. But the good and wise lion mocked at the pursuit of armed men, and roamed freely, or if he fled, fled fast and unharmed, over his part of the forest, for he had not to beware of pitfalls ; and he and his descendants occupied his corner of the wood securely, down to the days of the great King Realmah—commonly called Realmah-Lelaipah-Mu,——Realmah, the youth who could foresee things.

*Ellesmere.* I must admit that the fable is a very significant one, and keeps close to the matter it is meant to illustrate ; but these kind of illustrations never convince me.

*Milverton.* Before I conclude, there is one point upon which I wish especially not to be misunderstood ; and I trust that you will not misunderstand me.

I trust that you will not think that I wish Great Britain to act like a cruel stepmother—the stepmother that we meet with in fiction ; for I have often observed that in real life stepmothers are very kind—and to get rid of her colonies in the most summary and careless manner.

All I wish is, that these great colonial questions should be carefully considered by our statesmen. There may be a great State, or what will soon be a great State, which, in case of the outbreak of any European war, will be molested solely in consequence of its being attached to us by ties, however slight. Now, for the interest of such a State (if such a State there be), still more than for our own interest, I wish to disengage it from us, and so to free it from any mischief that might come upon it from its connexion with ourselves.

I have come to no fixed conclusions upon the difficult points connected with this matter. I only wish, both for

the sake of our colonies and ourselves, that this great subject should have due and instant consideration.

I do not pretend that I have not some distinct views and principles in my own mind upon this subject ; but I do not desire to impress them, at the present moment, upon you. All I ask for, is consideration.

*Sir Arthur.* I must say, Milverton, that you are very good and reasonable upon this great subject. I should have much less faith in you, and much less interest in your treatment of the subject, if you were to endeavour, at this early period of the discussion, to enforce upon us any cut and dried opinions upon it.

*Ellesmere.* Oh, he is as cunning a dog as ever lived, as regards the artful way in which he gradually gets his opinions to sink into your mind ! He began with me, as a little boy in a pepper-and-salt jacket and trousers, to convince me about the Corn-laws, and Free-trade, and other great questions about which he had made up his boyish mind most conclusively. To be sure he turned out to be right ; but that is no matter. That was a mere accident. I warn you that when he is most fair-spoken, he is most dangerous.

*Milverton.* I cannot talk any more to-day. I am very tired.

Having so said, Mr. Milverton rose to go away. Before doing so, however, he put his arm in a brotherly fashion round Lady Ellesmere, and gave her a kiss, saying, "I am so glad, my dear Mildred, that you are on my side, for I know you are ; and you must bring him round. It is an important

admission, by the way, that he makes—namely, that all the women would be on my side of the question.”

*Ellesmere.* Oh dear me, how wonderfully affectionate we are to those people who agree with us! It is not often that my poor wife, “a poor thing, sir, but mine own,” is honoured in this way. And I am not sure that I should like it to occur very often.

Please don't go yet. After a painful and elaborate discussion one ought to have something to amuse one. Do you remember that just before Milverton announced his five propositions, I said I could tell you something about a sermon that was divided into five heads? And Milverton would not let me interrupt.

*Sir Arthur.* Yes.

*Ellesmere.* Well, I was a boy of thirteen, at church with my father; and opposite to us, in the gallery, was a lad of about the same age as I was, in a pew with his family.

The sermon was of the order called drowsy, and we were well into the third head of the discourse, and I was trying to get a glance at the MS. in order to see whether we had got through more than half the number of pages, which I am sorry to say was a favourite device of mine, when my attention was arrested by a noise in the pew opposite. Up started the lad I have told you of (we will call him Tom Brown, remembering Tom Hughes's story): in the most decisive manner he brushed by his family, banged the pew door, and marched away, making a considerable disturbance.

Immediately after church, my father, one of the most amiable of men (Lady Ellesmere is thinking now how different from her son), said to me, “Johnny, we must go and

call at the Browns' directly. Tommy is either very ill, or there is something extraordinary the matter with the boy." Accordingly we went to pay a visit to the Browns', and there we found what really had happened. My little friend Tom Brown had been chaffering the whole week with a gipsy boy from the neighbouring common, about the purchase of a donkey. Late on Saturday evening the negotiation stood thus :—Tommy had offered 1*l.* 15*s.* The gipsy boy stood out for 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

During the first and the second head of the sermon, the wicked Tommy had been thinking over all the good points of the donkey ; and in the course of the third head had come to the conclusion that he would give 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* And, being a boy of a most decisive turn of mind, he resolved at once to complete the bargain.

That boy was the only person I ever saw go boldly out of church, banging the pew door, and stamping out as if he thought the whole congregation, if they knew what was in his mind, would entirely approve of what he was doing. You know if one has ever so good a reason for going out of church, one generally sneaks out as if one were doing the most wicked thing possible.

Now the recollection of that transaction has stood me in good stead ever since. When I have been arguing before the House of Lords, or the Privy Council, and have noticed that the attention of one of the Lords is wandering a little, I say to myself, he is thinking whether he will give 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* for the donkey, so I must quit this branch of the subject, and rouse him up with a fresh argument.

How invaluable this story would be to Members of Parliament ! When a man, in a long and tiresome speech that he is labouring through, sees that the attention of the House

is wandering, he should immediately realize the fact that it is thinking whether it will give its 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* for the donkey, and he should at once conclude by firing off his peroration, long ago prepared. It is the most foolish thing in the world to go on, even with good argumentation, when you see that your audience is tired. I should like it to be told of me that my auditors had always said, "I wish Ellesmere would have given us a longer speech; but he is always so succinct and curt." What an example the late Sir William Follett was to all of us! There *was* a man. People did not presume to cough while he was speaking. It was really one of the highest intellectual pleasures to hear that man deal with a difficult case, or a great subject. And how appreciative even the most uncultivated intellects are of such closeness of reasoning! I knew a common soldier who always went to hear the late Archbishop of Dublin preach, because, to use an expression which delighted me, "it was so well argued and put." By the way, what a good essay that is of that man of many initials, A.K.H.B., on the "Art of Putting Things."

Now you will all remember this story of mine about the 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* for the donkey. You are very good, Sir Arthur, in respect of speech-making, for you never make a speech in Parliament but it is a great speech, and I honour you for that. You are very seldom tiresome.

*Sir Arthur* (putting his hand to his heart). It is indeed a compliment to be praised by Sir John Ellesmere, whose praise, from its exceeding rarity, is certainly most valuable. I hope I may always deserve it. [Exeunt omnes.]

## CHAPTER XVI.

FOR some few days we had no readings nor conversations. The truth is, Mr. Milverton was ill. I think the excitement and the anxiety that he had lately undergone, from his desire to convince these people, had made him ill, but he would not allow, even to his wife or to me, that this was the case.

When he had recovered, we had another meeting. Sir Arthur began the conversation.

*Sir Arthur.* Do you know, I think, Milverton, that we behaved rather badly to you the other day. We treated you and Mrs. Milverton, and Mr. Johnson, as if you were enemies; and we, the know-nothings, held our private caucus, and arranged our opposition to you, somewhat ungraciously perhaps. But I can assure you that you had great friends in this caucus, in Lady Ellesmere and Mr. Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* I am very anxious to hear Realmah's speech.

*Ellesmere.* And so am I; not that there will be anything new in it; for, depend upon it, Master Realmah has nothing to say beyond that which Master Milverton has already said to us. But he (Realmah) is an interesting specimen of

a savage, and I should like to see how he deals with his Sir Arthur, his Cranmer, his Ellesmere——

*Cranmer.* Say, his Condore.

*Ellesmere.* And his Mauleverer, who, after all, will be the most difficult person to deal with.

*Mauleverer.* I do not know what the Lake City Mauleverer might have been like; but I can only say, that the British Mauleverer is a most reasonable person to deal with. It is true that he does not partake of any of your enthusiasms; but, at least, he is very like that good man, Londardo, and is apt to think that the arguments for and against anything are about equal; and so he is generally inclined to go the way that his friends would have him.

He is not like a certain yapping little poodle that I once ventured to describe, but is rather of the bull-dog order, ready and willing to take up his friend and master's side, without looking too anxiously into the rights of the dispute.

*Sir Arthur.* Let us have the King's speech, Milverton. The greatest proof that we can give you of our interest in your subject is, that we would rather listen to you than have any more of our own talk. And I am sure that this is the general feeling.

*Milverton.* I don't know how you all became aware that Realmah is to make a speech; I never told you. But Mildred knew it, and I suppose she told her husband, for there is no trusting a married woman with anything. She is sure to go and tell her husband; and then he, not having been trusted himself in the first instance, has no scruple in telling the whole world. The speech, however, does not come just yet.

Mr. Milverton then commenced the reading.



## The Story of Realmah.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

THE King began to look very old and worn and wan. It was a weakness of this great monarch that he would not know of this approach of age and decay. Never did he look in the polished shells that served as mirrors amongst the Sheviri, nor gaze down into the waters of the lake by daylight. He felt that he had yet much to do. Life had few, if any, pleasures for him; but it abounded in duties. That man is very strong and powerful who has no more hope for himself: who looks not to be loved any more; to be admired any more; to have any more honour or dignity; and who cares not for gratitude; but whose sole thought is for others, and who only lives on for them.

This was the state of Realmah. He ever feared that the civilization he had created with such great rapidity, would die away with equal rapidity after his death. Fearing this, even he, wise as he was, redoubled his efforts at a time when he ought, in great measure, to have relaxed them; and he would not know that he was fading away.

Quick to discern what was in their monarch's mind,

the courtiers were prone to talk before him of his never-failing youth and vigour; and had the effrontery to dwell upon this welcome theme, even when they saw the pale grey King, in his grand heavy robes, wearily make his way to a council, or drag himself along in some state ceremony.

Do what you will, you never can get to the end of the odd folly of mankind. It is a sea that cannot be sounded. The witty Erasmus may write a book<sup>1</sup> about it, but it defies the satire of the keenest satirist, and is beyond the imagination of the most imaginative man. Here was a prince who had done great things, and was inaccessible to any flattery about them. Indeed, he could not bear to hear them alluded to. So impatient was he in this respect, that he had cut short an ambassador from a neighbouring people, who commenced an oration by a long and laudatory description of the King's great doings. "Could we not, my Lord Ambassador," said Realmah, "take all this for granted, and proceed at once to the business in hand?"

The same man, however, was open to gross flattery upon the subject of his youthfulness and continued vigour; and did not object to be told, though he knew it to be false, at each recurring birthday, that the King possessed a charmed life, and that the past year seemed to have added to his vigour, rather than to have taken from it.

The art of sculpture is one which makes its ap-

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated work, "*Moriæ Encomium*."

pearance at the earliest periods of civilization ; and the Sheviri were already considerable adepts in this art. As was to be expected, the representation of their monarch was a favourite subject with the artists of Abibah. On the Bridge of Leopards, an elegant little wooden bridge which connected two portions of the eastern part of the city, there were two statues of the King. The second one had been taken from life, seventeen years after the first. The costumes of the statues were different—one being the garb of a warrior, the other that of a king ; but the second statue was even more juvenile-looking, if anything, than the first. And both of them represented a very young man, a kind of Apollo, who would by no means halt in his gait.

There was not a person, man or woman, in Abibah, who did not know the foible of the great King ; and probably it endeared him to them, for a man of great merit ought to have many foibles, if he would be much loved.

There is generally something very interesting in premature decay, and that because of the strange contrast it mostly affords. It is seldom, or ever, total. There has been either great physical or great mental overwork ; and part of the vital energies is deadened or destroyed, while the other part remains intact. Upon this other part new strain is put ; and gallantly for a time, if backed by a great soul, this other part answers to the strain put upon it. But each day the enemy is stronger, and the resisting power is weaker.

There was also in Realmah a quality which is to be noticed in the greatest men, but it is one which tells with great severity upon the vital powers. There was an almost infinite pitifulness<sup>1</sup> in Realmah. The private and the public troubles of his subjects became his own, and there was not a disease or a disaster amongst his numerous subjects that did not weigh upon the heart, and tax the energies, of the great and loving King.

His career, which we have but in a small degree narrated, shows that he possessed that first quality needful for a ruler—justice. But if there was any exception to this rule, any weakness of favouritism to be observed in him, it was in a leaning which he always showed to the tribe of the fishermen. Never was it known that the poorest fisherman was kept long waiting for an audience with Realmah. That tribe never suspected that the King's especial regard for them proceeded from his never-dying love for the Ainah. They thought that it was their own especial services to him on the night of the great revolution that endeared them to him. And, perhaps, his leaning to the fishermen's tribe was, after all, a stroke of policy (at any rate he pretended to himself that it was so), for it is a grand thing for any person in power to have any man, or body of men, upon whose affection he can profoundly rely, and whom he has not

<sup>1</sup> It is a strange thing, by the way, that that word "pitiful" should have been so corrupted, and that the man whose heart is full of pity should have come to be looked upon as a small and poor kind of man.

to study to win upon any particular occasion of difficulty. Even the great Napoleon, as hard a man as ever lived, could speak with loving tenderness of those who were "devoted to my person;" and it is one of the few blessings that attend great men, that they are sure to elicit a large amount of personal affection amongst those who come into close contact with them.

The forty-seventh birthday of the King approached, and was to be celebrated throughout the city with great rejoicings. It was customary, on that anniversary, for the King to receive all the official persons connected with his government, both of the city of Abibah and of the neighbouring towns.

It had been doubtful, on account of the wounds which the King had received on the occasion of the mock fight, whether he would be well enough to undertake this ceremony. But, notwithstanding those wounds were still unhealed, he did so, though on this day it was a very long reception, which lasted indeed for five hours. Never was the King more gracious—never did he give more ample encouragement to those of his high officers who had pleased him by the diligent discharge of their duties, and who had loyally promoted his great designs; but, at the end of the reception, he fainted away in the arms of his attendants. Still this warning had no effect in rendering the King more prudent; and, with unabated vigour, he prepared to undertake in a few days' time a great ceremony, the particulars of which will be narrated in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE FESTIVAL OF THE FOUNDATION OF ABIBAH.

IT was the festival of the foundation of the city of Abibah. The festival was always celebrated on the ninety-sixth day of the year,<sup>1</sup> and it was an occasion upon which the King was expected to speak very frankly to his people, and to declare to them his hopes, his fears, and his wishes for the future.

Whether Realmah felt that his health was in a precarious state (though no man dared to say that he was not as young and vigorous as ever), or whether he feared any quarrel amongst his allies and tributaries (and he was well aware that what he intended to do could only be done in a time of profound peace), he resolved that at this festival he would declare his great project to the people. His recent wounds, he knew, would not be otherwise than most serviceable to him on this occasion. In fact this may have determined him, as he was well aware that his people were much afraid that they had not yet earned his forgiveness, and would therefore be most anxious to conciliate him, and to make their peace at any sacrifice.

Now Realmah was a great orator—a born orator.

<sup>1</sup> The manner in which the day for holding this anniversary was fixed upon was by calculating as follows:—three fours were *multiplied* together; and to their product was added the sum of eight fours, thus making the total 96.

After the first moments of abject nervousness, which all men of fine temperament experience at beginning a speech, Realmah was never greater, never more self-possessed, than when he was addressing a multitude of his subjects.

The thousands of eyes looking up at him seemed to endow him with a part of their own magnetic force. He felt that he could move his audience to tears, to laughter, and even, what is more difficult still, to self-abnegation. He was well aware that on this great occasion he must tax his powers to the utmost, and either win or lose the cause which, for thirty-five years, he had set his heart upon.

It was from a platform ascended by steps in the centre of the great market-place of Abibah, that the King was accustomed to address the assembled people on the auspicious day of the anniversary of the founding of their city.

Slowly and painfully did the King ascend the steps on this memorable day. He smiled a strange, ghastly smile, composed partly of pain, partly of a wish to appear very gracious and very much delighted at meeting the assembled people. In the distance the smile looked very well, and seemed all graciousness ; but to the faithful Omki, his foster-brother, this set smile brought tears to the heart. And, strange to say (which was only too painfully noticed by Omki), the King, in the middle of the ascent, laid hold of his arm, and leant heavily upon it. "Keep close to me, dear Omki," he said ; and Omki shuddered, for the

King was not wont to say "dear," or to be so openly affectionate, even to him.

A word or two must be said of Omki before we proceed to give an account of the royal speech, and of its direful results.

There is much hero-worship even in these days, but, alas, of what a different kind to that of this faithful foster-brother ! It is the hero-worship of asking the hero out to unwelcome festivity, in order to show him off, of invading his privacy, of molesting him in every way : it is not the hero-worship of devoting labour and time, and fortune and self-sacrifice, and life itself, to a great man, who would be worth it all. Now it is little to say that Omki would have given his life for his foster-brother the King : he would have waded deep in blood, regardless of his own soul, to obey any order of the King. I am describing a pagan, and not a Christian ; but there is great merit in such self-devotion, in whatever way it may be shown.

The King gained the platform, and wearily threw his jasper-studded robes behind him.

His great Council followed—a body of venerable men, who looked as if the cares of state were deeply marked in their expressive countenances. There was a flourish of trumpets, or of the instruments that corresponded with trumpets, which was by no means ineffective, for the Sheviri were an eminently musical people, and, in their rude instruments, there were the beginnings of all the instruments that are now most



potent in the expression of musical ideas. The people were hushed into a supreme silence.

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*Milverton.* I reserve the speech for a new chapter ; and, before describing its effect upon the men of Abibah, would like to hear what the guests at Worth-Ashton have to say further upon Realmah's great project.

Here there was a pause for a time, but nobody chose to make any remark, and then Mr. Milverton resumed.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE KING'S SPEECH.

THE King commenced his speech. He began in those low, soft, musical tones which compel attention from a crowd.

He told his people of the delight it was to him to meet them ; and how, in that vast assemblage of thoughtful men (and he should that day demand the utmost of their thought) he believed that there was not one single human being who was not a friend of his—who was not indeed devotedly attached to his person and his government.

He went into various details, which we need not recount here, to show what had been done during

the past year; and he dwelt at some length upon the ever-increasing prosperity which had gladdened the streets of Abibah. He spoke of their improvements in manufacture, especially of the manufacture of iron, and pointed out to them how wise and how advantageous had been the policy which had made them the manufacturers of iron for all that part of the world. "See," he said, "the fruits of a generous policy. Had we kept this art to ourselves, we might, it is true, have been almost supernaturally strong to resist invasion; but now we not only can defy invasion, but we have gained the goodwill of all the people both far and near, and, in the last three years, our city is doubled in extent."

From all parts of the vast assemblage, at that and at other portions of the speech, the cries of "Maralah! maralah!"—"He has said it! He has said it!" (which corresponded to our "Hear, hear,") were heard.

While the King was giving these details there was a gentle murmur of under-talk amongst the crowd, for neither civilized nor uncivilized men can long endure the narration of details, however interesting they may be, or rather however interesting they ought to be. But this murmur was entirely hushed into a supreme silence when the King changed the subject, and began to speak about the mock-fight.

This subject he touched upon with great skill and delicacy. He took all the blame upon himself, saying that he ought to have known that the Sheviri, even in

play, could not bear to be defeated. He was glad that he had been one of the principal sufferers. With regard to those few poor men who had fallen, our good Queen, he said, had taken care to provide for their families.

When he ceased speaking on this topic, the crowd felt that a weight had been taken off them, and there was a general murmur of satisfaction, each man congratulating his neighbour that no evil thing had happened to them, and saying how good and kind the King was, so ill too as he looked from the effects of his wounds.

Realmah won many hearts by this part of his speech.

Then there came a long and elaborate story, or rather fable. Some such fable had always been told by Realmah on these occasions, and for this occasion it had cost him many a weary midnight hour to think over this fable and to prepare it. All the rest of his speech flowed from his heart, and was the gift of the moment ; but the fable was a work of art. He was not so much in advance in thought of his fellow-countrymen as not to think these fables a most significant way of conveying ideas ; and what to us would seem childish, was to him a great flight of imagination and of thoughtfulness.

The story was all about a crane and a serpent, and it told how the good crane was loved and favoured by everybody—brought good fortune wherever it alighted, and, in fact, was a sort of much-loved king.

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While, on the other hand, the serpent was hated by all living creatures; and even when it was innocent, and had left its poison behind it for the day, the remembrance of its treachery and its malignity made all creatures pitiless towards it, and anxious to destroy it.

The people did not quite perceive the drift of the story, which, however, was soon to be made manifest to them; but they applauded it, because any story about beasts, or birds, or reptiles, was very welcome to them.

The King then dwelt upon the various embassies which had reached the town of Abibah in the course of the preceding year, and showed his people what credit and what vast advantages had flowed from the commanding position which the Sheviri now occupied amongst the sons of men. "Is it not better," he said, "to be called upon to arbitrate than to be deluded into a participation in their trumpery wars? Not that we fear war—all the nations know that; and there lives not a prince so daring as, even in his dreams, to contemplate a war with the Sheviri;" and all the people shouted again with renewed enthusiasm, "Maralah! maralah!"

"What," Realmah continued, "could be said of the frenzy of those who should dare to attack the men by whose valour and sagacity alone the warlike nations of the North (now no longer dreaded) had been triumphantly beaten back to their inhospitable, ice-bound climes?"

And now he dexterously changed his mode of speech; he dwelt upon the beauty and the power possessed not only by himself, but by every one in that assemblage, even the meanest, of being as it were an arbiter of the fate of surrounding nations, of settling quarrels, of appeasing feuds, of being, if he might presume to say so, humble representatives upon earth of the great God whose name he did not dare to mention, who loved all men, and only wished that all mankind should be one brotherhood.

Here the exclamations of applause were redoubled, and the soft voices of women might also have been heard exclaiming "Maralah! maralah!"

Realmah then, with great tact, alluded to the labours of his Council; he was but the meanest of the servants of his people. What should he, a comparatively young man (here there was a smile on the faces of the whole assemblage, which each man and each woman strove to suppress), be, if he had not the guidance, the affectionate guidance, of their fathers, who had grown old in the service of the country, and who stood around him, a devoted band of trusty councillors, second to none upon this green earth?

He then, with the skill of an accomplished orator, affected to hesitate and to be overcome, while from the most distant outskirts of the vast assemblage there arose cries of the most endearing encouragement. They called upon the gods to bless him, to prosper all his doings, to preserve him to them for untold years; and even Realmah, who had meant the interlude

as a mere artful point in oratory, was himself, for the moment, overcome by the vast display of real affection exhibited towards him by his people. He absolutely wept; but knowing how mistaken a thing it is for an orator to be really overcome by his feelings, he threw himself back upon the thought of the great work he had to undertake, and of the immense difficulty that it would be to overcome his people's prejudices. He himself, however, scarcely recognised the effect he had produced,—that there was not a man in that vast assemblage who at that moment would not have thought it almost treason to presume to differ from their great King.

A little incident, too, succeeded in recovering Realmah more than almost anything else could have done. His eyes had fallen upon the critical Condore; and, to the King's amazement, Condore, who by the way was always fascinated by oratory, was one of those who gesticulated most furiously, and made the most tempestuous exclamations of applause.

But Condore, true to his critical character, the moment he found the King's eyes upon him, changed immediately, and began to move his head from right to left, in token of the severest disapproval. Realmah, who like most men of genius had the keenest sense of what was ridiculous, was amazingly tickled by Condore's behaviour; and the good Condore probably at that moment unconsciously fulfilled his mission on the earth, for he succeeded in restoring the King,

who had been nearly overcome by these outbursts of affection, to the full mastery of his usual cool, crafty, self-possessed nature.

Realmah resumed his oration, feeling that it was almost the supreme moment of his life. "What then have we gained, and how have we gained it? We have gained the affection of all the peoples who dwell within four hundred innesangs.<sup>1</sup> Now look," he said, "what is it that governs? Is it force? Force lasts only as long as it is present, but the power of affection lasts for ever, speaks even out of the tomb. Most of us here present are men.—Are we ruled? Doubtless we are. By whom are we ruled? Is it by those who have strength to compel us, or is it by those whose weakness and whose delicacy contain their most undoubted strength? What man amongst us, from the king on his throne to the fisherman whose daily bread is precarious, will not own, if he be a man, to an infinite desire to win and to gratify those who are dearest to him in his household, his wives and his children?" (There was enormous shouting in the crowd, with loud bursts of laughter, in which the women did not join, and great cries of "Maralah! maralah!")

The King proceeded: "I have spoken, it may be jestingly, it may be that the most earnest thoughts that I have ever uttered underlie this playful speech. Do you think that the law of affection is confined to

<sup>1</sup> Innesang, a measure in use with the Sheviri, being 400 times 4 feet, taking the average length of the human foot as the unit.

individual men and women alone? May there not be states that should feel towards one another a similar relation? And now I will tell you what I have felt from my youth upwards, and, if ever you have loved your King, you must listen to him when he seeks to persuade you of that which, from his earliest years, has been his deepest wish, and to which the endeavours of his years of maturity—years not passed without suffering, such as only a king can know—have been devoted. What has been the one thing which has long prevented our being supremely loved and admired by the nations around us; which has stood in the way of our being loved by them with the devotedness which a woman has for the lord of her household, her chief? It has been our possession of the great fortress of Ravala-Mamee. This, and this alone, has alienated the affections of the nations from us. When we were a weak people, it might have been well to preserve it; but now we are beyond all fears, and our rule will best be enlarged, maintained, and preserved, by our possessing the entire confidence and love of all the surrounding nations.

“I am for abandoning this fortress” (there were cries of “Maralah nevee”—“He has not spoken it!” The King disregarded them; he continued): “Is it much to confide in your king? There are not many times in a man’s life when it becomes him to say what he has done; but there are such times. Have not I—have not we” (turning to his councillors)—“raised you from a petty state to the most commanding



nation known in this part of the world? Is it for ordinary men to measure the wisdom of chiefs? But I need not upbraid you. I see by your countenances that you are only too willing to believe in your king, who has led you on so often to victory; who has made each of you a conqueror; and who now seeks, with your aid, which you will not refuse your king, to place your dominion upon a basis which cannot be removed—the love, the affection, and the gratitude of all the surrounding nations, upon whose necks you might have trampled, but to whom you say, ‘Rise, and be one with us, who are the leaders of arts, of knowledge, and of policy—the indomitable Sheviri.’” The vast assemblage answered to the King’s noble words with corresponding enthusiasm, and there was but one cry, or if there was, the voices of dissentients were drowned by the predominant shout of “Maralah! maralah!”

The King, upon whose face there beamed the light of joy such as no man had yet seen upon it, resumed: “It is not I—who am I that I should guide your councils? It is your fathers, the venerable men who stand around me, who sanction all that I propose, and who, far superior to me, have overcome their attachment to a policy in which they were bred; which they have long maintained by arts and by arms; but which, with the greatness of minds open to conviction, they are now determined to supersede by a policy of wise and affectionate conciliation.” The surrounding members of the Council intimated, by

expressive gestures, their consent, and the approving shouts of the whole assemblage were redoubled.

Realmah resumed his speech ; and resolved, in one splendid peroration, long ago prepared in those midnight walks of his up and down the balcony, to fix upon the minds of his people his own prophetic ideas. I call them prophetic, for, alas ! they were not to be realized in his time ; but such ideas were to be for the guidance of nations to whom the very name of Realmah, of his nation, of his generation, would be entirely foreign, and to whom his wars, his alliances, and his suzerainties would be as utterly unknown as the battles of the kites and the crows, or any of the inferior animals.

Realmah resumed : “ And now these are my last words to-day to all of you. And it may be that the King may not speak to you many more times, for he is feeble ”—(from all parts of the assemblage arose shouts of “ Long live the King ! ”)—“ yes, he is feeble ; and he knows, though he has sought to disguise it from you and from himself, that he is not the man he was. He would have you drink in these words as if indeed they were his last. He has sought to be a father to you ; and all his own joys and sorrows have been put aside to fulfil to each one of you the loving relation of a father. And you have been good sons to him.

“ What man amongst you is there that does not love Realmah ? ” (The audience were moved to an inexpressible degree.) “ But I come back to my great

subject. What is the highest power? What is the greatest force? What is the most unbounded dominion? Is it the power of the sword? Is it the force of arms? Is it the dominion gained by conquest? Lives there one amongst you, the most daring, the highest placed, whom Realmah could not, by a word, condemn to death? But what would the King gain by the loss of a loving subject? And so it is with each one of us, all of whom are kings. We will rule in the hearts of surrounding nations, and not diminish or destroy them. It shall be for ever said of the Sheviri that they were dauntless in battle, merciful in conquest, and good lords whom all men desired to live under, and whose beneficent sway spread out undivided, unresisted, unopposed, from where that bright luminary rises joyous in the strength of youth, to where, surrounded by his purple guards, he descends into the waters that receive him tenderly, and refresh him for the labours of the ensuing day.

"I say again, What is conquest? What is power? What is domination?" And here, strangely enough, Realmah concluded in a form of speech that was adopted on a similar occasion by one of our own greatest orators,<sup>1</sup> so true is it that the highest flights of oratory are alike in all nations, and under all circumstances. "To have found the peoples of this vast region sunk in barbarism,<sup>2</sup> living from day to day

<sup>1</sup> Lord Macaulay, in his Indian speech.

<sup>2</sup> The word for barbarism is "*pralo-mi-mamee*,"—"only able to count 1, 2, 3."

a mean, care-driven, hazardous life, each man set against his neighbour, each chief against his brother chief, each state against its neighbour state; their arms of defence and offence the weapons of children; their habitations, huts; their policy, only craft; their ambition, only self-interest; their mode of life, little better than that of the wild animals of the woods—to have raised all these people till they are men, statesmen, members of great nations—these are the triumphs of reason<sup>1</sup> over barbarism. This is the just, the only just, and God-rewarded conquest insured to us by our arts and our morals, by our divine policy and our heaven-descended laws.”

The King ceased. The assemblage was moved to a degree that had never been known before, even at these high festivals. Upon their recovering from their emotion, they shouted with one voice, “Let it be as the King has said; we are his slaves,—long live Realmah.”

But, strange to say, the King, for a minute or two, moved not, but gazed at his people with a glassy stare, as if all intelligence had gone out of him. Then, recovering himself, he grasped at the balcony, afterwards, in a moment, at the arm of the faithful Omki, who was close to him. “Stay near me,” he muttered in strangely indistinct words, “guards, close around me: let the trumpets sound.”

The faithful Omki divined the coming danger. Leaning heavily upon Omki, and tottering down the

<sup>1</sup> The word was a long compound, “sitting alone at night.”

steps, surrounded by his body-guard, and followed by the councillors, whose looks to one another betrayed their fears, the King was half led, half carried, to his palace, the populace remaining in profound ignorance of the sudden seizure by illness of their beloved sovereign.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

##### THE DEATH OF THE KING.

EVEN during the days of his last illness, Realmah's exertions for the good of the kingdom were unremitting. The heir to the throne, Andarvi-Milcar, who loved the King fervently, and who, perhaps, of all the men in the city least desired his death, was constantly with him, receiving his last instructions. And here the exceeding sagacity of Realmah may be noticed; for though he spoke much of what had been his designs for the future, he spoke more of the men who were to carry them out, giving to Andarvi, even in the minutest particulars, his opinion of the characters, not only of the principal officers of the kingdom, but even of those lesser magistrates who had considerable power in distant settlements.

It was a curious thing, as illustrating the King's mechanical skill and love of science, that while he was ill he had invented an ingenious arrangement by

which the sponges containing nutritious liquid could be conveyed to his lips by his slightly moving a particular string or wire.

During his last illness he saw much of his wives. Realmah had really been very good to the Varnah. On ordinary occasions, and when his mind was full of business, he could not pretend to sympathise with her in her petty cares and hopes, but every now and then he made a great effort to please her. He would send for some rare product or some rare work of art to a distant part of his dominions, and would then confide to the Varnah what he had done, pretending all the while that he was doubtful whether he should get it, though he knew full well that no one ever refused the great King anything he asked for. Then he would charm the Varnah by talking about the expected present, as if he were deeply interested in it, and he would contrive that it should come upon some festal day, especially upon the birthday of her departed mother; for the mother's birthday was always held in great reverence. Realmah really liked the Varnah, admired her skill in household management, was pleased with her orderliness (though he had none of that quality himself), never forgot the aid he had received from her during the siege, and believed that in her way she was attached to him. Indeed, to the court jester, the only man whom he allowed a glimpse into his inmost soul, he would say, "I am the Varnah's choicest possession, and she will mourn for me, poor thing, when I am gone, as no one else will mourn.

In truth I am afraid lest then all the other possessions should lose favour in her sight." And when she came into his presence, as he was dying, he would take her hand, and speak kindly to her, and tell her how to guide her household and her wealth. And the poor Varnah was astonished to find that even in those matters in which she had thought her husband but a good-natured child, he was her master—a wise and sagacious man, full of foresight.

To the beautiful Talora, too, though less loving, he was kind; and she was astonished to find that he read the utmost depths of her soul, counselling her, notwithstanding her protests, as to whom she might marry hereafter, and what alliance she might with least loss of royal dignity advantageously contract; and Talora wept bitterly, discerning, perhaps for the first time, what a great man she had married, and what a small part of her heart she had given to him. The intensity of this feeling on her part may best be shown by the fact that it was three long years before Athlah could win the still beautiful Talora to be his bride, and that Realmah was never mentioned but that Talora blushed and sighed and looked sad, when she thought how great a soul had nearly been her own, and what she might have made of the love of a man who had so large a capacity for loving.

But, poor woman, she was somewhat mistaken, for it was not in her nature to comprehend the love that the Ainah had called forth in Realmah, and what

immeasurable regrets and infinite longings of his had been buried in her tomb.

On the ninth day after the festival, at three in the morning, when the air was coldest, a deep groan from the King summoned his drowsy attendants. He started up in bed. In a loud voice he said, "Preserve my kingdom; be faithful to Andarvi-Milcar. I go to meet her for ever—for ever; light, more, more light." And saying this, the great King sank back upon his couch, and with a sigh poured forth his spirit.

The next morning there was sorrow and lamentation in almost every house in Abibah; and they mourned for him as for a father.

His funeral was magnificent. They raised a great mound for him, which, amidst the changes of the earth's surface, is still visible in the wood that lies adjacent to those waters which were once a great lake, and are now but a small one, and which mound still puzzles the learned amongst the antiquarians.

What a strange memorial is that round, coarse, undescriptive thing, a mound, to tell of heroic deeds, grand thoughts, and unbounded suffering! And yet how often in the world's history is it all that does remain to commemorate these deeds, these thoughts, and this suffering. Perhaps, too, all that will remain of us in after-ages, and of our intricate civilization, will be a few such mounds, and some collected heaps of rubbish, to be pored over by the learned men of a new generation, occupying a little portion of that



surface of the earth which is, after all, but one vast unrecorded burial-ground.

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*Ellesmere.* And so poor Realmah is dead! You all think me a very hard man, but if there is anything in this world that I have a horror of, it is my friends dying, whether in real life, or even in fiction.

I have become quite accustomed to Milverton's droning on about Realmah, and thought that it was to last for the greater part of my natural life. I must not say that he is a friend in fiction, and not an entire reality. As for Mrs. Milverton, Lady Ellesmere, Sandy, and even Milverton himself, they have the firmest belief in their Realmah. You could not offer them a greater insult than to suppose for a moment that such a being as Realmah had not existed, and that he had not done all these fine things. They get together in the study, and I hear them in my room overhead buzzing away, and I know that it is all talk about Realmah. I have very little doubt that Blanche and Mildred had a good sisterly cry together (nothing comforts a woman so much as having a good cry) over "poor dear Realmah's death."

*Sir Arthur.* I agree with Ellesmere, it is hateful to come to the end of anything, or anybody.

There is one thing I am very curious to know; and that is, whether Andarvi-Milcar, Realmah's successor, fulfilled Realmah's wish, and gave up, or demolished, the fortress of Ravala-Mamee.

*Milverton.* He did; but whether he was successful or not in so doing, I do not know. I suppose that in some

succeeding age the Northmen did come down again, and make an end of the Lake-cities.

I feel, now that it is all written, that I have omitted to dwell upon many things and persons that I ought to have described, but I did not like to worry you with details. For instance, I should like to have told you about the King's jester, whom I have alluded to, but never described.

He was a very clever man, but excessively indolent. He never cared to take much interest in public affairs. He had the right of accompanying the King everywhere, and being near him whether at a council or a feast. Sometimes at a council he said very shrewd things, and was really of use. At other times he took no interest in the business in hand, but all the time played a game with himself called *kinwee*, which was played with fishes' bones. He was very fond of Realmah, and followed him about like a dog. He delighted in witnessing so much energy and activity, and felt almost as if he himself was energetic and active. He kept the King's secrets well, and that endeared him to Realmah. His mischievous propensities plagued the good Varnah a great deal, and he delighted to tease her, but she bore with him most kindly for the King's sake.

*Ellesmere.* Just as Mrs. Milverton tolerates me for Milverton's sake.

*Milverton.* It was very comical sometimes to see the jester at a council, when he was in one of his queer moods. He would throw down a large number of these fishes' bones on the table, close to Realmah, then make a grab at them, shutting his eyes; then say, "Odd or even?" and retire into a corner to count the bones, nobody of course paying any attention to him. At last he would get tired of playing by himself, and would resolve to bring Realmah into the

game. The poor jester did not dare to go near anybody else, so he would whisper persuasively in the King's ear, "Loftiness, my dear, do let us have a bet, it's so dull."

*Ellesmere.* I thoroughly sympathise with this poor man. Everybody does so over-explain everything to me. I am so tired sometimes of everybody.

*Milverton.* And the King would return the whisper, "Go into the corner, throw ten times,—even bet of two shells there are more odds than evens. Play fair, don't cheat your poor King, he has always enough to do with his shells." And so the jester was kept quiet for a time.

The jester might have served the new King, but he would not do so. After the funeral of Realmah, the poor jester sadly followed the Varnah home to the house which had been Realmah's in his earliest days, and where the Varnah meant to dwell for the remainder of her life. He (the jester) had never asked leave to live with Her Loftiness, nor had she made the offer to him to do so, but she would have taken care of a dog (though she disliked dogs) which Realmah had loved, and she was secretly delighted that the jester had elected to live with her.

Two more uncongenial souls could not have been imagined than Her Loftiness and the poor jester. She could not understand his wit (he was really very witty), and she detested his coarse fun and his practical jokes, but had endured them most kindly for Realmah's sake. Realmah, too, was not the man to be amused by practical jokes, but he liked to see the people about him laugh, and be amused with anything, for he said, "Then they do not busy themselves too much with the affairs of my government."

*Ellesmere.* The poor jester! I pity him from the bottom of my heart. I know full well what it is to live with people

who do not quite understand one. None of you, except perhaps Milverton, quite understand me—not even always Lady Ellesmere.

*Milverton.* Be comforted, Ellesmere. It was not long before the jester had a companion.

The faithful Omki had, in obedience to Realmah's dying command, attached himself to the new King. But he could not take any real interest in public affairs, or in the new King. He became utterly listless and depressed, so, at the end of a year, he went to Andarvi-Milcar, and said, "My lord and king, Omki's heart is not a big heart, and it has not room for more than one love. I am the man who was in the same cradle with the great King, and I cannot love anybody else. Let thy servant go, for he is stupid and useless." Andarvi-Milcar consented; and Omki, also, went and took up his abode with the Varnah. Her Loftiness rejoiced that she had now two feckless, listless, human beings to look after, who had loved her Realmah.

See what a dangerous thing it is to come within the influence of a very great man, or of a very admirable woman. If you have not a great capacity for loving, they take all the love out of you at once, and make the rest of the world uninteresting to you.

These two, the jester and Omki, would sit in the porch before the house of Her Loftiness, the jester playing his game of odd-and-even by himself, while Omki sat silent, full of sad memories of Realmah; and then an old man would join them, and pass the sunny hours of the day in their company.

This old man was Condore. His chief happiness consisted in talking with the jester and with Omki about the late King; and there was a great deal of talk, in which you

could hear the words, "and he said to me," and "I said to him;" and then they went through the strange scenes which had occurred on Realmah's coming to the throne, and on the defeat of the Northmen, and on the sham fight, and on the last days of Realmah's public appearance.

Thus these three men passed the remainder of their lives. Condore lived to a great age, for the daily exercise of criticism is not a thing which rapidly exhausts the vital powers.

*Ellesmere.* I am glad at least to find that, according to Milverton, I am to have a long life.

*Milverton.* There was a councillor whom I forgot to mention at the time when I described to you the rest of Realmah's councillors. I thought of this omission afterwards, but imagined you would not care to have it remedied. However, I should like to describe him to you now, for his was a very peculiar form of mind, but one not unknown in modern times.

His name was Pimmenee. Like the other councillors, he was a very clever man. He was the most observant person amongst the Sheviri of natural phenomena; and, in general, knew more facts than anybody else. He would make a statement very boldly, and apparently well founded upon facts. But then there would come such a string of exceptions that the original statement would seem to be broken down by them, and at last you felt as if you had nothing to rely upon.

Realmah would try and bring him back to his original statement by repeating it; but Pimmenee would never admit that the repetition was correct. He had not said quite this. That was not the exact word he had used; or, if he had, it would not quite bear out his meaning.

For instance, a question would arise where the summer

camp should be placed, and Pimmenee would at first pronounce very decidedly against a particular spot as being near a morass. Then there would come a host of exceptions to the statement—there were morasses and morasses. It might even be an advantage to be near a morass. And so he would go on, fining down his original statement till at last hardly anything remained of it.

*Ellesmere.* Is he not a little like two of the other fellows, namely, Lariska and Delaimah-Daree?

*Milverton.* No : there is where you are so often deluded in estimating men, and fail to get the most out of them—summing them up under some one general form of condemnation : saying, for instance, that they are not *practical*.

Now, Lariska was simply too argumentative : Delaimah-Daree too resourceful, and therefore too inconclusive ; while this man, Pimmenee, was too exceptive. To get the good that was really to be got out of these men, you must have mastered the peculiar bent of each of their minds, which prevented each one of them, taken by himself, from becoming a perfect councillor ; but which did not prevent their being of great use as individual members of a council.

I should like to give you some of the proverbs of the Sheviri. These were, in after-ages, all attributed to Realmah ; and some of them, I really think, were his.

*Sir Arthur.* I should like to hear them. There is nothing in all literature more interesting to me than proverbs, and the fact that they are no man's children makes them more interesting. I do not know a single instance, except in the Bible, where you can say for certain that such a proverb was made by such a man.

*Milverton.* Well then, here are some of them :—

*The viper will stand upon the tip of his tail to make himself agreeable in good company.*

*The crane stands upon one leg, in heavenly meditation; but all the while he is looking sharply after his fish.*

*When the eyes and the lips lie, look to the hands and the feet.*

*The prudent man (literally, the man who has eyes in the back of his head) cares more whom he is with, than even what he does.*

*Four fishes smelt at the bait and turned their tails to it; one fish came by and swallowed it. (The advantage of a council.)*

*Before the journey is over, the dog has run twice the distance. (Applied to a man who does not go directly to the point; but wanders hither and thither like a dog.)*

*Make the four salutations to a friend every day. (This alludes to the four bows that were made to foreign ambassadors by all who met them; and the proverb means this,—Keep up always the highest forms of courtesy with your friends.)*

*Jealousy kisses its left hand, because the right hand caught the fish.*

*The man you hate cannot carry his food to his mouth, but you hate him more for his way of doing so.*

*The ghosts of snails get into their shells (money) by night, and go, for company, where there are most shells. (i.e. Money makes money.)*

*Eukee! Eukee! Eukee! but, wife, the salt fish will do.* ("Eukee" is a solemn word addressed to the gods; and the proverb alludes to the hypocrite, who addresses the gods fervently, but sacrifices to them only salt fish.)

*The tears of a chief cause sore eyes to all other chiefs.*

*The water sends you back (reflects you), so do all men and women.*

*Better be quite blind than see one side only of everything.*

*If you will do the thing that has not been done before, first hide all the stones that are in the streets of the city.*

*To the tiger his claws; to the serpent her venom; to the eagle his talons; to the rat his teeth; and to men and women calumny:—the good God gives weapons to all.*

*The Sheviri cursed the rain; but the patient rain went on raining, and the earth became green.*

*Say it often; men, as well as parrots, will say it too.*

*If you slay your adversary, are you sure you have done him any harm?*

*The ants march in one line, and overrun kingdoms.* (An argument for unity and order.)

*The echo says nothing of itself; so, the people.*

*The clever lizard leaves its tail in your hand.* (This was a favourite saying of the King when he was urging compromises on his councillors.)

*A lie lasts for a day: but it may be the day.* (This, in the



original language, is really a most effective proverb. The articles "a" and "the" are not expressed directly, but are included in the substantives. A day, *i.e.* an ordinary day, is *Tala*. The day, *i.e.* the day upon which some important decision is arrived at, is *Talammah*; and so the proverb runs in the original language, *Strag* (a lie) *marit Tala*; *pol kree Talammah*.)

*When you want to sell the blunt hatchet, be the first to say that it is blunt.*

*How wise the clever men would be if they could understand the foolish !*

*All make the four bows to yesterday.* (Meaning, I suppose, that all must submit to what we call now "the logic of facts.")

*One wise man knew the secret way into the city ; but all said, "Why should we follow one man ?"*

*The king had a friend before he was king.*

*Only the quite deaf hear praises always of themselves.*

*If the spider barked like a dog, would he catch flies ?*

*He who looks down, gathers shells (i.e. money) ; he who looks up, sighs for stars, but they do not come to him.*

*The tiger that you look at will not give you the death-stroke.*

*A wise man said a word too much : that word was the word of a fool.*

*While the lightning lasted, two bad men were friends.*

*Ellesmere.* Some of the proverbs are not bad. I like "the clever lizard" one, and "the dog that runs twice the distance."

There, again though, how hard men are upon dogs. Why, men, metaphorically speaking, run ten times the distance! Then I like "the four fishes" one. I have myself observed that it is much easier to delude fish when they come singly, than when they come three or four together, and are fishes in council.

There are several of the other proverbs, Milverton, that are far too modern in their substance, and that you could never persuade me were uttered by any savage, however much you may try to make him out a Solomon.

*Sir Arthur.* I like all of them very much.

*Ellesmere.* Of course you do. As I have said before, one never gets an author to speak disrespectfully of another author—in his presence. Now I'll give you a proverb which shall be worth something. *Never believe a man when he talks about anything which he thoroughly understands.*

*Mauleverer.* That is the most impudent proverb I have ever heard.

*Ellesmere.* Impudent it may be; but true, it undoubtedly is.

When a man understands anything very well, he generally has an especial repute for it, and he speaks with an eye to that repute of his. Sir Arthur being an eminent man of letters, his *public* opinion of other men of letters is not worth that [snapping his fingers].

*Sir Arthur.* I shall respond to Ellesmere by giving him a proverb, or rather a saying, which I met with the other day, and which has delighted me beyond measure. It was in that recent work of Sir Henry Bulwer. Some Frenchman said, "*C'est un avantage terrible de n'avoir rien fait*;

*mais il ne faut pas en abuser.*" What a wonderful lesson that is for some critics ! Eh, Ellesmere ?

*Ellesmere.* I don't seem to feel it personally, but it certainly is not bad. It is indeed a tremendous advantage to have done nothing, when one is oneself the subject of criticism.

*Milverton.* Well, now that "Realmah" is ended, all that I have got to say to you is, whether you have done anything or whether you have not done anything (in which latter case you will certainly be in the best position for criticism), do not trouble yourselves with criticising, but do consider whether we may not draw some lesson from this savage chief as to the management of our own political affairs. Only promise me that, and I shall be amply rewarded for any pains that I have taken in telling you the truthful story of his life.

[Here the conversation ended, and we went our separate ways.]

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE holidays were coming to an end, a melancholy fact which, as may be imagined, we did not at all like to contemplate.

It was breakfast time on the Monday morning preceding that on which we should have to return to town. After we had sat down, Sir John, as usual, was the first to begin talking.

*Ellesmere.* Oh dear, dear! 'Tis sad to think that, after one more revolving week, I shall have to go back to town with Lady Ellesmere, to be entrusted to her tender mercies, and to take leave of Fairy and of the water-rats, of whose bright little eyes and inquiring countenances I see so much when I go fishing; and of Milverton, too, and of all the other intelligent creatures with whom I am at present domiciled. Let us make the most of this week.

*Milverton.* I am preparing, at Sir Arthur's particular desire, an essay for you for next Saturday.

*Ellesmere.* And that is what the fellow calls "making the most of this week." However, it is all right. The blackness of Black Monday is greatly diminished in intensity when the preceding Saturday is made of a dark brown colour by having to listen to an essay.

*Milverton.* But this will be an essay that you will like, I think.

*Ellesmere.* That is what you always hold out. The particular thing that you are at work upon is always to give life a new savour. It is the one subject which mankind is pining to hear discussed.

*Milverton.* It is to be an abrupt, disjointed essay. It is to sum up, as it were, our discussion, of late, of many subjects. There will be much that is commonplace in it; much that you have often heard me talk about before; much that you yourselves have said; and, perhaps, there will be a few new things. I really believe it will be the last I shall ever write.

Hereupon Sir John muttered something which sounded very like a grace after meat; but Lady Ellesmere put her hand upon his mouth and stopped his muttering. When she removed it, however, he began talking.

*Ellesmere.* No: I don't believe it. Placards up! "Signor Doncatelli, or Herr von Klinkel, has consented, at the urgent request of his many friends and admirers, to give one more representation, in which he will appear in his well known part of, &c. &c."

• No one seems to know when to leave off. Poor dear Sir Walter Scott! even he, shrewd man though he was, must write "Count Robert of Paris."

Pooh! don't tell me. I know but too well the nature of all you fellows who are accustomed to exhibit, and to be pointed out as monsters by the finger of the passers-by (*monstrari digito prætereuntium*), whether you are statesmen,

actors, or authors. You never can be quiet unless you are upon your stage. There will no more be a last essay by Milverton, while he is alive, than there will be a last muffin baked as long as there are people who have the rude digestion to consume muffins. Don't hold out false hopes : there is nothing more cruel.

*Milverton.* I shall not reply to Ellesmere's sneers. He will be sure, after all, to take a box for Lady Ellesmere and himself, to hear Doncatelli.

What I want, however, to consult you about—for I am very much puzzled myself about it—is, what title we shall take. The essay will consist of endeavours to show how human life may be improved. I do not for a moment agree with Mauleverer that we are at a standpoint of misery, as he imagines ; but, no doubt, there is a great deal that is very miserable in the world, and within our power, I think, to ameliorate.

*Cranmer.* What should you say to this for a title?—"On the improvement of things in general."

*Milverton.* Too vague, Mr. Cranmer.

*Sir Arthur.* "On the improvement of the human race?"

*Ellesmere.* That's right ; lug in "the human race : " that is sure to please Milverton. What says Sandy?

*Johnson.* "On physical and mental development, with a view to the future welfare of the world."

*Ellesmere.* Oh, you pedantic Scotch boy ! we can't have that.

*Mauleverer.* "On the possible, but very far from probable, diminution of the extreme wretchedness of mankind."

*Milverton.* No. I can't accept that ; I do not begin by looking at things from your point of view, Mauleverer.

*Mrs. Milverton.* "On consolation."

*Ellesmere.* Pour out a cup of tea for me directly, please, Mrs. Milverton. She will well water the teapot, I know, to spite me, if I say what I think of her title before my cup is poured out.

My dear woman, it is *not* "consolation" that we are going to write about. It is to prevent the necessity for your rubbishing consolation. We all know that you women think you are such "dabs," as we used to say at Eton, at consoling. It is not bolts and bars for the stable door that we are going to provide, after the donkey has been stolen; but we are here assembled, or rather shall be next Saturday, to prevent the stealing of donkeys.

And now, Lady Ellesmere, what wise suggestion are you going to make for a title?

*Lady Ellesmere.* "On mankind being made less provoking."

*Ellesmere.* What would that do for the solace of the world, if womankind were left as they are? For surely the art of provoking is their own.

I see you will have to come to me for a title. I boldly suggest this one: "On the art of making men comfortable."

In this Act of Parliament, or, if you like it, essay, the word "men" shall include men, women, dogs, horses, cows, water-rats, black-beetles, and all other animals and insects.

*Milverton.* Your title is rather long, Ellesmere, especially if your interpretation of the word "men" be added to it.

*Ellesmere.* Not a bit too long. The Act, I mean the essay, shall always be referred to as "The Comfortable." That will please Sir Arthur.

*Sir Arthur.* It will show what a forgiving disposition I have, and how fond I am of "The Magnanimous," that

I confess I agree with Ellesmere, and am quite content that his title, in its full length, should be adopted.

*Milverton.* So be it then ; and Mr. Johnson and I will do our best to get ready by next Saturday. I shall want a good deal of indulgence from you.

*Ellesmere* (tapping his breast). This is the shop, as Mr. Squeers would say, to come to for indulgence.

Here the conversation about the essay ended. Mr. Milverton and I worked very hard during the whole week, and succeeded in getting our materials ready by Saturday.

That Saturday was a lovely day. Indeed, it was one of those calm, warm, bright days, which we sometimes have in England, and in which are combined almost all the beauties of summer and winter. There had been a frost in the early morning ; and a white rime was still upon the trees, marking out each spray and twig most beautifully. We took our places in the summer-house in the garden that overlooks a vast expanse of country. Sir John Ellesmere thus began :—

*Ellesmere.* Who shall say we understand anything about “The Comfortable,” when we take our places in this summer-house to listen to a shivering essay which might have been delivered to us in a comfortable study ?

*Milverton.* Shall we go back then ?

*Ellesmere.* Oh, by no means !

*Lady Ellesmere.* That is so like John. He will object to anything, even when he likes it himself, merely for the sake of making, or, as he calls it, taking, an objection.



*Ellesmere.* Don't interrupt, Lady Ellesmere, and waste time. Don't you see that Milverton is wild to begin, and that there is an alarming mass of paper in his hands to be got through before we shall have any comfort?

Mr. Milverton commenced reading: "On the Art of making Men Comfortable; the word 'Men' to include Men, Women, Dogs, Horses, Cows, Water-rats, Black-beetles, and all other animals and insects."

*Milverton.* You see I have adopted your title literally, for so you willed that I should. And now, first, I am not going to read an essay, but to make a speech. I shall speak to you in a most familiar way; and, moreover, shall consider that you recollect a great deal that I have already said, so that I may merely have to deal with it by allusion.

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It is a very great difficulty to introduce anything like method into this vast and complicated subject. What I shall do is this: I shall first consider all the main points which bear upon a man from without: I shall then take him to his home and see how he is to be made comfortable there: afterwards, I shall conclude with several general reflections, which will have for their tendency to show how man and other animals (I do not neglect Ellesmere's "rider") should be made more comfortable.

[Here Mr. Milverton spoke upon the topics of Government, Education, Religion, War, and Railway Management. I omit all that he said upon these

subjects, because otherwise the essay, or rather the speech, would stretch to an immoderate length. He spoke for nearly forty minutes; and, as he speaks very rapidly, the speech contained a great deal of matter which it is quite impossible for me to give now. At a future time I may take some opportunity of doing so. He then proceeded, and said as follows:—]

I descend now to questions that may be considered of lower importance than those I have discussed, but which are nevertheless of great importance as regards the comfort of mankind.

I go first to the consideration of their dwellings. These are at present deplorable. We have not made any advance (indeed I think our movement has been retrograde in this respect) since the time of the Romans. The main objects are for the most part neglected. How dampness should be avoided? how noise should be subdued? how fresh air should be provided? how smoke should be carried off? seem to be unimportant questions, so that the exterior is kept according to the style most in favour with the architect.

The waste that there is in this matter is most surprising. If houses were well built, there would be very little expense for repairs, for painting, and, perhaps, for fire insurance. We have excellent materials; we make hardly any use of them: and there is scarcely a house in which any provision is

made for the exceptional events, either festive or calamitous, which are sure to occur at some time or other, in every household.

Then look at the waste in decoration, in furniture, in knick-knacks of all kinds. I often take an individual room, and I say to myself, "If I had the money which that foolish cornice has cost, which that hideous centre-piece in the ceiling has cost, which that painful furniture, constructed so as to retain the utmost amount of dust, has cost, which those knick-knacks, which amuse one for two or three minutes and are a trouble ever afterwards, have cost, the room could be so enlarged and improved that the people who inhabit it would be far more comfortable."

The last thing architects and builders generally seem to consider is, that the room is really to be inhabited. I have seen the whole wing of a great palace or castle so spoilt for the want of a little additional space, that there was not sufficient room for the furniture which would be imperatively required in the twenty or thirty apartments of that wing. There has been no space in these rooms (which people are not only supposed to sleep in by night, but to live in by day) for a sofa, and for a writing-table.

Again, no attention has been paid to climate. It has been forgotten that there are a good many rainy days in Great Britain in the course of the year, and that the British spring is not altogether a balmy season. In this respect our ancestors were much wiser than we are, and understood what is called

“Gardenesque architecture.” Now, one often sees a great white staring house situated in the midst of a great park. Nobody seems ever to have considered that people might like to have some walking exercise or to breathe some fresh air without being exposed to inclement weather in that spacious park. I have often seen that the needless, foolish, and ugly decorations of two or three of the principal rooms would have provided a beautiful colonnade like our cloisters at Trinity, in which the sickly and the young might enjoy the sun, and have the advantage of fresh air and exercise throughout the winter days.

The above are trifling things to speak of; but, while we are discussing “The Comfortable,” they are scarcely out of place.

As to the cottages of the poor, they are outrageous. Often constructed without the means of drainage—the walls in some instances being built up against the earth, the outlets being exposed without any protection against the east winds—they are really nothing better than nests for fever, and well-devised traps for rheumatism and consumption.

Here comes in that sad neglect of admirable materials for building which I have before commented upon. Terra-cotta, slates, and tiles might be used with the greatest advantage in such constructions. In fact, a house, and still more a cottage, ought to be impregnable to damp throughout, and capable of thorough ventilation. Will you have the

kindness to show me any such constructions from the highest to the lowest class of buildings?

And now look at our buildings in London. I am very sensitive, I acknowledge, to noise ; but I do not believe I am altogether singular in this respect. Now, you know, one is absolutely dependent upon one's neighbour to the right and to the left. We enjoy smoke from their chimneys. We have the pleasure of listening to their daughters practising the first scales in music ; we partake, uninvited, of the clamour, if not of the enjoyment, of their feasts.

But I must not dwell much more on this subject : all I wish is, that when people are building houses they would not forget that these houses are to be inhabited, and would act accordingly. If half the thought which is given to obscure questions in theology or metaphysics had been given to the question of making men more comfortable by building better habitations for them, what a much happier and more endurable world it would have been.

When Sir Walter Scott died, and critics were commenting upon his works, one of the best criticisms was to this effect :—"Shakspeare builds up his characters from within to without. Their coats, dresses, and external paraphernalia of any kind are the last things about which he gives any indication ; whereas Sir Walter commences from without, and his heroes or heroines are greatly connected in your mind with their outside paraphernalia." There was some little truth in this, though I think it was much too severe on Sir

Walter; but I have often thought that we mostly do what was complained of in Sir Walter, and nearly always attend to the outside first. There is charming Gothic architecture, as seen from the outside, in which the Gothic architect, neglecting the improvements which have taken place in materials since the time of the Goths, gives you foolish windows and dark passages, and every evil with which the Goths were contented—as indeed they were by their ignorance obliged to be contented—to endure.

The same error is to be found in those men who live for the outer world instead of for home. This brings me naturally to the subject of ostentation, the direst enemy of comfort. No, I will not put it down exactly as ostentation, but as the doing of things because others do them, whether you like them or not, and whether they are suitable or not, to you or your means. I think I will call it imitation, and say that imitation is the direst enemy of comfort. Women, I am sorry to say, are greatly to blame in this matter. It is always an unanswerable argument in their minds that other people do anything. In fact, women are the only real and sound Conservatives, or rather Tories, in the world; and one great end that we shall gain from their education, if ever a better education is given to them, is this, that we shall have much less conventionalism to contend with.

Now I proceed to the next point, viz., as to what should be done inside a house to make it a happy

and comfortable home. Of course, the great danger, the pressing danger, of domestic life is its familiarity—mark you, there is immense pleasure in this familiarity, but I think we might have all the pleasure without the mischief. I recur to a few of the points which I have often dwelt upon before. Never scold for little things and for things in which there is no intention to do wrong: people don't mean to break glass or china, or to spill the grease; and yet you often hear a child or a servant reprov'd for some accident as if it had been done out of *malice prepense*.

Never ridicule other people's tastes, especially the tastes of those who live with you, or any of your neighbours' tastes, unless those tastes are absolutely noxious and mischievous.

Cultivate the great art of leaving people alone, even those whom you think you have a right to direct in the minutest particular.

Now here I am going to say a most important thing, and I beg your attention to it.

Praise those with whom you live, if they really deserve it. Do not be silent upon their merits, for you should cultivate their reasonable self-esteem. If they have merits, other people—strangers—will tell them of it, and they think it is unkind of you who have lived with them, and ought to love them, not to have recognised their merits. A person shall live with a person his junior, and during the whole of his life shall never have told that junior of his good qualities or his merits; and it is only perhaps when

that first person dies, that the other finds out that, during the time they had lived together, he had been thoroughly appreciated ; but, unfortunately, it has been a silent appreciation.

Domestic comfort is the very core of happy life. Now what perfection it would be if, in domestic life, the courtesy and civility which strangers show to us were combined with the affection and the absence of restraint which belong to domesticity !

Now I am going to insist upon a point which might be thought very trivial, but which yet has something in it. Do not merely endeavour to be joyous and pleasant with those with whom you live, but even to be agreeable to look at ; in fact, I say it boldly, although you may laugh at me, try and look your best for your own people as well as for the stranger.

[Here there came in a somewhat long statement about communism, which I am sure would not be very interesting to most people, and which I omit. Then the subject of wealth was introduced by Sir Arthur. Mr. Milverton proceeded :—]

Riches ! In any discourse about human happiness, something must be said upon this subject. Everybody admits that money is the source of all evil, and everybody tries to get as much money as he or she can. Of course, seriously speaking, wealth is a good thing. That we should have plenty of corn, of coal, of wool, of cotton, and of cattle, is before all things



necessary if we are to be comfortable ; but what is a bad thing is, that too much respect should be paid, and too much honour given, to merely wealthy people.

“ The learned pate ducks to the golden fool :  
All is oblique.”

Now instead of its being a thing which is *primâ facie* for a man, it may be argued that it is rather *primâ facie* against him, that he is rich : it is a fact which he has to account for, and often the account he may have to give is anything but creditable to him. What may be called the legitimate influence of riches is surely enough. That a rich man has the services of other men and animals in every way at his command is surely power enough. You have, doubtless, heard me tell the story of a dignitary in the Romish Church, one of the most actively benevolent of men—a sort of Borromeo ; and he was descanting among his friends about the worthlessness of worldly goods, and he concluded by saying, “ All, all, is vanity—except a carriage.” Doubtless the good man had often found, in his career of active benevolence, the advantage of rapid locomotion.

Well, let the rich have their carriages, and make good use of them.

*Ellesmere.* Only one word ! I won't interrupt again. Let them take care to send their carriages to the railway station, to meet their poor friends who come to visit them.

But you will say, give us instances of the illegiti-

mate influence of wealth. There is one that occurs to me directly. I say it is iniquitous, it is monstrous, that a man should be raised to the peerage merely because he is a rich man, and can—to use the cant phrase—afford to support the dignity of the peerage. That dignity of the peerage would be easily supported, if only those persons were made peers who had, by public service and distinguished merit, deserved the honour.

If it were universally recognised that there were great objects in human life, such as social distinctions, over which riches had no influence whatever, riches would be less unreasonably, and less immoderately pursued. Again, I object strongly to a man's power of voting, in any capacity, being augmented by his wealth. I do not care about your telling me that this is sheer Radicalism, and talking to me about stakes in the country: that betting phrase has no weight with me. The judgment of men who have devoted themselves to the getting, the saving, or the enjoying of riches, may be as much warped by those employments as the poor man's judgment may be by his poverty. I beg to ask you one question: do you think the railways would have been worse managed if the qualifications for directorship had been lowered, or had been abandoned altogether?

However, all that I contend is, do no honour to a rich man merely because he is rich. If this maxim were adopted, riches would be robbed of half their mischief.

I now pass to quite another subject, which, however, is not unconnected with the foregoing. I maintain that now life goes too fast, too fussily, and too anxiously, to admit of much comfort, at least for those who have any prominent part to play in life. All our swiftness of locomotion, our promptitude of communication, tends to promote this fussiness. Here, again, I am merely talking after Ellesmere. I must own I am very much puzzled as to how to suggest any remedy for this state of things. I have tried to think over it deeply, and the only thing that has occurred to me, as a remedy, is this,—that more persons should be taken into partnership with those who have to bear the arduous parts in life, and who would then have more time for thinking. The general complaint now is, which I have heard uttered dozens of times, that those who have anything to do, have generally too much to do, while there remains a number of intelligent and active-minded people who have nothing to do—unless, indeed, the shooting at hares and pheasants be considered something to do.

Now, I want to put before you a dilemma: either this increase of work is profitable to the community, or it is not; if it is not, let us drop it; but if it is, then the benefit to the public will pay for the employment of additional heads and hands.

I mean this to apply to Government, and to all public services useful to the community. But I will illustrate my meaning by an example taken from Government.

[Here Mr. Milverton gave an account, which would not interest my readers much, of the labours and duties of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and strongly urged the division of the work of that office into two branches, with a new Minister.]

I pass now to another subject,—recreation. I do not advocate recreation exactly upon the same grounds as those upon which it has often been argued for. I say this—I say that men——

*Ellesmere.* Yes, and women too. Oh, dear! I ought not to have interrupted.

—that men are such mischievous animals, that you can hardly take too much pains to occupy their spare moments innocently. Oh, if we could have put down frequently to a game at whist Attila, Charlemagne, Genghis Khan, and the First Napoleon! I am afraid that there would be chronological difficulties in the way of this arrangement; but you know what I mean.

As to recreation for the poor, I agree with *Ellesmere*, that that man will be one of the greatest benefactors to his species, and will fulfil the functions of a great statesman, who contrives that the poor man shall take a little longer time than he does at present to consume his pot of beer. Remember there is but standing-room in those bright and odious gin-palaces; and one “go”—I believe that is the word—is swallowed hastily after another, because the poor man has nothing else to amuse him, or to do.

Now I do not care what amusement you provide for him, so that it is tolerably innocent,—whether, following the humble Milverton, he sits quietly down to draughts and dominoes, like a French peasant ; or whether, imitating the ambitious Ellesmere, he makes “ ducks and drakes ” with a flat stone upon a pond ; or whether, partaking the poetic nature of Sir Arthur, he devotes his spare energies to the beautiful accomplishment of dancing ; or whether, following the example of the solid Mauleverer, he plays at bowls and quoits (for those, I know, are your favourite games, Mauleverer) ; or whether (to please you, John-son) he indulges in golf and cricket ; or whether, to the delight of the wise and fact-loving Cranmer, he plays at the game of Mechanics’ Institutes—it is all one to me, so only that he is amused, and does not drink off his gin or his beer quite so quickly.

Why is it, by the way, that women are so much better than men—less given to drunkenness, or any similar excess ? Simply because they have a thousand little occupations. A woman, who is not oppressed by much riches and many servants, always finds plenty to do about her house, and, in that, finds her chief occupation in life and often her chief happiness. And if Sir Arthur’s plans<sup>1</sup> are adopted, women must also, of necessity, partake in the recreation provided for men. Now all the feminine species love dancing, either as actors or spectators. The other day, in a

<sup>1</sup> This alludes to some views of Sir Arthur’s given in a conversation which I have not recorded.

hideous back street, an organ-grinder came down the street while I was passing, and six or eight young ragamuffinneses, who seemed to spring from the gutters, began to dance to the polka which the organ-man was grinding out. They danced capitally, keeping the right time, while their rags fluttered in the wind. Their little grimy faces were suffused with joy, and their bright teeth shone all the more brightly from the contrast with the general dirt of the countenance. Their mothers came out to see them. One or two slouching men lounged to the doors and looked on complacently. For the moment that wretched street was quite lit up with festivity.

You may think me a foolish man, overmuch given to sentimentality; but I could have sat down, if there had been any clean place to sit upon, and cried, though crying is not much in my way. But it did grieve me to think how few opportunities for recreation these poor little wretches had; and I pictured to myself a scene which I have often beheld near Dresden, where, in some tea-garden near to the town, I have seen the artisan and his wife and his children all making themselves supremely happy (at an expense which is often consumed in one or two "goes" at a gin-palace, swallowed in a few minutes' time by the respectable father of a family in England), dancing being the principal amusement, and eating and drinking only secondary.

I pass on to other topics connected with the great subject of promoting the comfort of mankind. These

topics will be of a general character. The main enemies to human comfort are—intolerance, denigration, unjustifiable repetition, unjust criticism, uncalled-for publicity, pedantry, irrational conservatism, and the cultivation of hardness of character.

It would be like giving out one of Blair's sermons, just such as we used to have at Eton from Dr. Keate, and which we called "Second-prose"—a juvenile corruption for "Second-prayers"—to dilate much upon these topics; but I shall say a word or two upon each.

Touching intolerance, it is comparatively easy for men of large and tolerant nature to be tolerant, generally speaking. Their difficulty will ever be to be tolerant of intolerant people. Let them remember that intolerance is the twin sister of ignorance, and that they do not understand nor appreciate these intolerant people if they cannot tolerate them.

Denigration. It may be very stupid in me, but I cannot understand the pleasure which people take in blackening each other. In the first place, it is such an 'easy thing to do. The clever thing to do, is to find out people's merits. I do not say this satirically; but it is often the outer points of men's characters—little foolish habits, modes of talk that are not agreeable, tiresome ways, unpleasant roughness on the surface, all which afford such easy opportunities for denigration, while, to discern the sterling worth and merit and kindness which there are in so many human beings (I believe in nearly

all) does require nice observation, guided by a kindly imagination.

I should not care so much about this denigration, if there were not always people ready to repeat to the person blackened all the dark and unpleasant things which others have said about him or her.

Touching unjustifiable repetition, which makes so much mischief and destroys so much comfort in the world, I would only quote that good man, Thomas à Kempis, whom I have quoted before, and who says, "Do not hasten to repeat even those things which you believe" (*"Nec audita, vel credita, mox ad aliorum aures effundere"*).

With respect to unjust criticism. The world is full of this, and the critics little know what pain they occasion. I do not say that critics should be able to do the work they criticise, but really they ought to sympathise to some extent with whatever they criticise. Do they ever think how difficult it is to do anything? It is lucky that we come upon the fruits of other men's work in former generations, when there was less criticism, for there is no knowing what good work might not have been stifled, if it had been subjected to the same ordeal of criticism which abounds in the present day. If we do not take care, we shall enter into a Byzantine period of the world's history, in which there is endless comment, and little or no original production.

Now, for pedantry. This is one of the greatest enemies, in a small way, to human comfort; it



pervades every class of ſociety. Scholars and official men are eſpecially accuſed of it; but they are not more guilty than other people. How dreadfully pedantic doctors are, and railway officials, and, above all, ſervants! A doctor would ſee his deareſt friend die rather than interfere with another doctor, or preſume to ſay that the treatment is not quite judicious. And I believe if a ſuperior being, who had only obſerved our world from a diſtance, were obliged to come down and live amongſt us, he would not be ſurprised at our ſtupidities and our cruelties—our wars for example—ſo much as he would be by all the pedantries, vanities, and conventionalities, by which we create ſo much diſcomfort. The utterances that would aſtoniſh him, until he became familiar with them, would be, “It is not my place to do this:” “It is not your place to do that:” “I think I ought to have been conſulted:” “It ſeems I am nobody now;” and the like. He would ſay to himſelf, “They are always tormenting themſelves about trifles. They do not look at the ſubſtance. They do not conſider what things ſhould be done; but rather, how theſe things ſhould be done according to certain narrow formularies.”

Now, for irrational conſervatiſm. I am ſure that I am fully alive to the advantages of conſervatiſm. It is a grand thing, as ſome one has ſaid, that in England we never wake up ſome fine morning and find from the newspapers that everything has changed, and that we are about to live under quite a new

dynasty. But there is such a thing as irrational conservatism. An evil is fully proved to be an evil, and an obvious remedy is suggested to counteract it. You say to yourself, paraphrasing Shakspeare—

“ The times have been,  
That, when the brains were out, the *thing* would die,  
And there an end.”

But no, it won't die. It goes on spasmodically without brains, and continues to cause a great deal of practical discomfort. All this is the result of an irrational conservatism, prone to reject every new thing merely because it is new.

Now I come to unreasonable publicity. Publicity in these days is too rapid, and not inquiring enough. There comes out a flaming attack against some poor man, based upon certain statements. In a day or two, the man generally contradicts some of these statements, and apparently with truth. But the mischief has been done. The accused person has been made very uncomfortable, for people are always in a great rage at being accused in any respect wrongfully. Now it occurs to me to ask, Why could not the accusing writer have made a little more investigation before he wrote the accusing article? I suppose the answer will be, that he must write to live, and he cannot make a living out of it if he is to take all this trouble in investigation. All I can say is, that as there seems to be a likelihood of publicity increasing greatly, an immense

amount of discomfort will be caused, both to public and to private individuals, by rash and injurious publications.

I am now going to touch upon another subject, not before alluded to by me, and which I daresay you will take to be very fanciful in me, and somewhat effeminate. Is there not a certain hardness in the English character which, instead of being repressed, is much cultivated in modern times? I scarcely know how to describe it—whether to class it as stoicism or cynicism, or any other ism; but I perceive it, and feel it. No young man likes to show that he feels anything very much, or cares for anybody very much. Now you see from the literature of former ages that people then were not so reticent. I admit that there is something grand in the Spartan-like endurance which enables you to let the fox gnaw you, without your making any unpolite allusion to the pain you suffer. But there is a wide distinction between this endurance and the reticence to which I have referred. If you constantly repress the expression of feelings, you will gradually cease to have these feelings. Now, for the comfort of the world—and it is that which I am advocating—it is desirable that we should know more of the better and more amiable parts of each other's characters, and that amiability should not be diminished by the constant avoidance of the manifestation of it. Do you hear, Sir John?

[Ellesmere nodded.]

I am afraid I have hitherto neglected to comment upon the rider which Sir John Ellesmere was good enough, with the consent of the company, to add to the title of my essay. I can only say that I shall never be happy or comfortable in this world while the lower animals are treated as they are ; and I believe that mine is not an exceptional case, but that there are tens of thousands of human beings who feel exactly as I do. If you were to amend all other evils, and yet resolve to leave this untouched, we should not be satisfied. It is an immense responsibility that Providence has thrown upon us, in subjecting these sensitive creatures to our complete sway ; and I tremble at the thought of how poor an answer we shall have to give when asked the question how we have made use of the power entrusted to us over the brute creation.

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*Ellesmere.* According to Milverton, in order to make people comfortable, we are to praise them when they deserve it, even though we have the misfortune to live with them. Don't pinch my arm, Lady Ellesmere ! I praised you so much before we were married, that there is an immense balance of praise, still unaccounted for, that will never be deserved on your part. But I have not indulged Milverton to this extent, and therefore I can afford to say now that the essay is not despicable. Useful, too, it is. People come bothering me, even in court, and saying, "How I wish I were you, having the pleasure of assisting at those essays and conversations which take place at

Worth-Ashton." And these people are wonderfully suggestive too, telling me what you should write about, and what I should talk about. Now I can answer them, "My good fellows, only read his last essay, the very last that ever is to be, together with my talk upon it, and then you need not read any more, and need not bother me any more, for you will know exactly what we think upon every subject."

Now I will at once point out the things I agree with. I agree with what you say about government and education ; also about riches and religion. Indeed, what you said about riches and education was chiefly derived from me.

By the way, with respect to religion, could you not have said something more about sermons? I have only heard three sermons in my life upon what may be called the daily topics of common life. Kindness to animals, gentleness and tolerance in domestic life, not ridiculing the young, not hurrying to repeat everything you hear, and several other topics that you dwelt upon, would make excellent subjects for sermons. Only the sermons must not be vague ; they must not be Blairish ; they must condescend to details. The preacher must sometimes say, "I saw this or that the other day, and I must protest against it." He must not be afraid of using common words, and must call a spade a spade, and not an agricultural implement. If he is going to speak against bribery at an election, he must use the word "bribe" pretty plainly.

"It is no doubt, my Christian brethren, a thing to be greatly reprehended that when a person is admitted to exercise the privilege connected with a great trust, held for the good of the community at large, and for the welfare of our holy religion, he should, in an unseemly manner, betray that trust for the sake of any creature comfort, or endanger

his soul by yielding to the desire of the natural man for filthy lucre, when lucre of any kind cannot be honourably or virtuously conjoined with the due exercise of this important privilege."

What poor man discerns in that sentence any allusion to pots of beer and five-pound notes for his vote? He perceives that somebody has done wrong, or will do wrong. Naturally he thinks it is the squire, and he goes away saying, "Parson have a-been giving of it to the squire this morning, he have."

*Sir Arthur.* I perceive a great opening for "filthy lucre" to be gained by Sir John Ellesmere, if he would but write a series of skeleton sermons.

*Ellesmere.* I will do it when I have time, and you shall have a presentation copy, Sir Arthur. I think they might even be of use to you when you are composing sonnets.

There is one thing you have omitted, Milverton, as regards the art of making men comfortable. I shan't be comfortable until you give me some good plays to go to, played by great players. It is true there is always the House of Commons, which Charles II. said was as good as a play; but I want something beyond that.

*Mauleverer.* Yes; I like a good play. It is the only time one thoroughly forgets one's private miseries.

*Cranmer.* I don't care much about plays.

*Mrs. Milverton.* I think they are the most enjoyable things in the world.

*Milverton.* I will tell you a very foolish thing that is often said, even by very clever men, about playgoing. They say, "Why care to go and see Shakspeare acted? Can't you read it in your closet?" Now this appears to me such nonsense.

*Ellesmere.* Yes, it is. I don't believe that anybody thoroughly understands a great play until he has seen it acted.

*Milverton.* If there is anything in the world that I think I know well, it is *Macbeth*. I knew it when I was six years old, for my mother used to spend hour after hour, and day after day, in teaching it to me, and making me play it with her; but when I came to see a great actress in Lady Macbeth's part—Helen Faucit—new lights burst in upon me, and I saw what a delicate and refined fiend Lady Macbeth could be.

*Ellesmere.* Yes, I know, Milverton, that is a theory of yours, that "Lady Macbeth" is her best part; but I differ from you, and think that in "Rosalind" is her greatest triumph. Now I will tell you what I think is one of that lady's greatest merits as an actress. It is that she is not always quite the same. Of course her main conception of the part does not much vary; but there will be particular touches—new felicities—evolved in each representation. She gives me the notion of one to whom her part is always fresh, because, like the characters of all persons who are good for anything, it is, in fact, an inexhaustible subject of study.

*Sir Arthur.* Well, now, I like her in the *Lady of Lyons*. She it was who made the Pauline. I remember seeing her act with Macready in that play, and I never was more delighted in my life.

*Ellesmere.* You see now what a pleasure is lost to us if we neglect the drama. I shan't be comfortable, Milverton, until you have the kindness to restore that to us—an easy matter, of course, for such a genius as you are.

But to revert to Milverton's speech. I quite agree with

what he said about the iniquity of adding undeserved honours to riches. Riches ought to have no effect over the distribution of honours and dignities. All merit throughout the world receives an insult and a discouragement when a rich man receives an honour on account of his riches.

*Sir Arthur.* As to discouragement, I differ from you.

*Milverton.* And so do I.

*Sir Arthur.* The men who do anything that is worth doing seldom think about reward of any kind. You can get their best work from them, whether you treat them well or ill.

*Milverton.* Quite true, Sir Arthur. We should confer honours upon them, not so much for their sakes as for ours. And not for ours in a worldly or acquisitive point of view, for, as you say, we shall get their best work from them, whether we reward them or not.

*Cranmer.* I don't know. They knock pretty hard at the doors of the Treasury sometimes.

*Mauleverer.* Yes ; after their work is done.

*Ellesmere.* Let us proceed with the discussion on the essay. How severe Milverton was upon our present mode of building and decorating. I think some general principles might have been enounced there—such as that celebrated one of Pugin's, "Do not conceal the construction." The mischief that is done by concealing the construction is immense.

Let us each invent a maxim. Of course it will only be partially true, as all maxims are. Let us be silent for five minutes. Walk about if you like (my locomotive thoughts are always best), and then each of us shall propound his or her nostrum in the form of a maxim.



We agreed to do so, and in five minutes were re-seated and ready to produce our maxims.

*Ellesmere.* Of course I am ready first, and mine will be the wisest maxim. *Never mind the outside.*

*Lady Ellesmere.* *Avoid uniformity.*

*Ellesmere.* Very good. What an advantage it is to live with clever people : how it sharpens the wits ! I almost think I shall change my maxim into, *Find out clever people, and insist upon living with them.*

*Lady Ellesmere.* One would think I had followed John about before we were married, and had implored him to allow me to live in the light of his sagacity, and to sun myself in the warmth of his tender nature.

*Ellesmere.* You gave clear proof of your good sense in doing it. Why deny it ? What do you say, Mauleverer ? What is your maxim ?

*Mauleverer.* *No artificial surfaces of any kind.*

*Ellesmere.* That is grand, but there must be many exceptions—gilding, for instance.

*Cranmer.* *No house to be built on leasehold property.*

*Ellesmere.* Tyrannous, and inadmissible, I fear ; but very suggestive. What do you say, Milverton ? We expect something very good from you, as it is your especial subject.

*Milverton.* *Never do anything in building which cannot give a good account of itself.*

*Ellesmere.* A splendid moral maxim ! but is it not a little remote from bricklaying and plastering ?

*Milverton.* I really do not know how to sum up what I mean in one maxim, but I will endeavour to explain.

The other day, before we left London, I took a walk. I came upon some masons busily chipping holes in some blocks of stone at the basement of a grand house ; making, in short, little dust-pans for the London dirt to accumulate in. This was done, I believe, because at the Pitti Palace, in Florence, the architect had, doubtless to save trouble, used rough and indented blocks of stone. Now what account could these little dust-pans give of themselves ?

Then I saw a house with three huge brick pilasters rising nearly to the roof, but not quite, and all that they supported was a beam of wood fantastically and ridiculously ornamented ? What account could those pilasters give of themselves ?

Then I paid a visit, and was shown into a fine room with a coved ceiling. There were seventy-eight half-brackets, which, if they had been completed, would have had to support four beams of wood, which had manifestly other support. These semi-brackets were elaborately carved, and abounded in leaves. They were splendid receptacles for dust and dirt. The only account they could give of themselves would be that they were put up to accommodate spiders. Indeed the benevolent attention paid in house decorations to the judicious lodgment of spiders is quite marvellous. I wish people, when they were building, provided as carefully for the accommodation of servants.

*Ellesmere.* The illustrations are good, but the maxim remains somewhat vague and obscure, according to my judgment. What do you say, Sandy ?

*Johnson.* *Let every house in the country, and, where possible, in London, have a good large playroom, separated from the house by a passage having double doors at each end of it.*

*Ellesmere.* Elevate Sandy upon a tub, send at once for

Theed or Woolner, and have a statue made of Sandy, with a battledore in his hand. It is a most judicious suggestion that he has contributed.

What a place that room would be to send children to on rainy days, and whenever their irrepressible animal spirits keep the nerves of the elder people in a state of anxious quivering!

N.B. (and this would make that playroom an earthly paradise). It should be an understood thing that the family are not "at home" to visitors, when they are in the playroom.

*Sir Arthur.* What a place for private theatricals, without upsetting the rest of the house!

*Ellesmere.* No foolish flowers to be put there to take up room. It should be big enough for croquet, while battledore and shuttlecock and children's hoops should revel in it.

*Milverton.* What a place it would be for a good jovial dinner to one's poor neighbours after a cricket-match or an archery meeting!

*Lady Ellesmere.* What a place to practise archery in!

*Milverton.* I will engage to build it out of the expensive and ugly follies——

*Ellesmere.* Which would, of course, be committed, if you were not entrusted with the building of the house.

*Sir Arthur.* Another good point is that there would be much less space required in the ordinary reception rooms, if one had such a room as this for extraordinary occasions.

*Ellesmere.* You are all going into too much grandeur. Sandy and I mean this room to be roughly constructed and attached to houses of very moderate calibre; and, if we were left alone for a fortnight, without being bothered with

essays, and had one carpenter attached to us, we would knock up something of the kind here.

Now, Mrs. Milverton, what is your maxim?

*Mrs. Milverton.* I will give up the playroom, though with great regret, if you will only give me two rooms separated, in a similar manner to that which Mr. Johnson proposes, from the house, to be used in case of illness, and especially in case of infectious illness.

*Ellesmere.* An excellent idea! But you must put it in the form of a maxim.

*Mrs. Milverton.* Leonard, do put it for me. You know I am not clever in putting things.

*Milverton.* Mrs. Milverton wishes to say that *Every house should be so arranged as to contain a domestic infirmary.*

*Ellesmere.* Well, you are all very clever! and have offered a heap of good suggestions.

As I proposed the game, I think I ought to be allowed to have another turn.

[We all assented.]

Then I say, *When you are building, think of the comfort of your servants, even before you think of your own.*

["Hear, hear," from Mr. Milverton and Sir Arthur.]

My first maxim, however, was the great one. I really am proud of it. I should like it to be commemorated in my epitaph. By the way, as this is Milverton's last essay, it would be a very appropriate thing if I were to give you a sketch of what my epitaph should be. I think it should run thus. Give me your pencil, Sandy; let me write it out:—

He was a sound lawyer ;  
 And, by a peculiar felicity,  
 Not uncommon to great advocates,  
 The side on which he argued  
 Happened always to be  
 The side of justice and of truth.  
 He never beat his wife, though she was often  
 Very provoking.  
 He was an endurable friend,  
 And, in a dull country house,  
 Was worth a deal of money  
 As a guest.  
 He was a good master to his dogs,  
 A persevering fisherman,  
 A powerful singer ;  
 And when he borrowed books, he always  
 Took care to return them.  
 The grand maxim,  
 NEVER MIND THE OUTSIDE,  
 Which has improved the Art of Building  
 Throughout the world,  
 And which has tended to dignify and purify  
 All other departments in human life,  
 Was his'n.

*Sir Arthur.* Excellent ! But there must be a Latin quotation somewhere.

*Ellesmere.* Oh, ah ! Latin. Yes, I have it. "*Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes.*"

*Sir Arthur.* I must be very stupid, I suppose ; but I do not see the appropriateness.

*Mauleverer.* Nor I.

*Ellesmere.* Nor I ; but it will set people thinking. They will say I used it in some great speech, and that, as it had never been heard in the House of Commons before, it completely crushed Mr. Disraeli, or Mr. Gladstone.

*Sir Arthur.* No : say something of which nobody can

make any meaning, such as "*Sed memor quia immemor*" ("But mindful, because unmindful," ladies).

*Milverton.* No: turn it this way, "*Immemor quia memor*" ("Unmindful because mindful"), and then a very subtle interpretation might be given. Don't you know that, when you know a person very well, and love him or her very much, you have more difficulty in recalling his or her countenance than that of any ordinary person?

*Ellesmere.* That is too fine-drawn. I stick to my Gracchi.

But is not my epitaph modest and touching? I could almost myself shed tears for the loss of such a man. I do not say that I was a perfect friend, but only an *endurable* one. And then how exquisitely my honesty, carefulness, and general propriety of conduct are indicated in what is said about the returning of borrowed books! Some people might think there is a little flattery in the words "powerful singer," but I know that Lady Ellesmere always goes out of the room when I begin to sing, and I conclude that her exit is from an excess of pleasure that requires solitude to moderate it.

I observed that Lady Ellesmere did not say anything, and looked grave. Women do not like this kind of jesting about serious subjects, such as epitaphs. Sir John saw this too, and immediately turned into another branch of the subject.

*Ellesmere.* What you said about pedantry, Milverton, was not bad, but I think it was muddled up in your mind with other things, and, if you examined the matter,

you would find that what you disapproved of was a mixture of pedantry and insolence.

*Sir Arthur.* Resulting in disobligingness, which is but too common everywhere.

*Ellesmere.* Everybody knows, and Lady Ellesmere better than anybody, that I am the least offendable of mortal men. But I have been offended thrice in my life, and in each case it was by an official personage. Mark you that, Sir Arthur and Mr. Cranmer.

*Milverton.* Let us hear all about it. I can hardly imagine your being offended with anybody.

*Ellesmere.* The guilty official personages were the croupier of a gaming-table, a young woman in a refreshment-room at a railway-station, and an Under-Secretary of State.

*Mauleverer.* How came you to be on such terms with a croupier as to be offended?

*Ellesmere.* Don't be alarmed! I never lost a penny at a gaming-table in my life. When once I am convinced that the odds, in however small a degree, are against me, not a thaler would I venture. But I met this fellow in some reading-room, and I asked him to do me some little service, such as one man may reasonably ask another, to show me where the bell was, or to be good enough to indicate the way to the hotel of the Three Knives, or to allow me to have the *Kölnischer Zeitung* when he had done with it.

He intimated to me that people mustn't speak to people if people had not been introduced to people, and snubbed me entirely. He was the most insolent of the three.

She was the haughtiest. I was foolish and tiresome enough, seeing a largely-spread board, to wish for some-

thing to eat and to drink. The young lady was apparently absorbed in writing an epic poem. She looked over my head, as Dickens describes, "into the far distance," and yet I felt she saw this tiresome person. I never was cut so dead in my life. I went away hungry and thirsty; but I found another damsel who was gracious and kind to me, and gave me a bun, from the stifling effect of which I have not yet fully recovered. Oh, she was haughty, I can tell you, that first young woman!

Now for my third snubbing. My time is too highly appreciated for me to bestow it unnecessarily; but I had to represent some grievance—I think it was for some constituents—to the — Office.

I made my way, not without difficulty, to the Under-Secretary, — not without difficulty too, from the many interruptions, did I contrive to state my case. Then he commenced snubbing me fearfully. You will think I was in a rage. Nothing of the kind. An odd idea struck me while he was talking, that amused me all the time.

Did you ever hear the story of Mrs. Siddons, "How gat he there?" You don't know it? Well, she heard some one say of a Frenchman that he was in his bureau. Her ideas of a bureau were not of a room, but of a piece of furniture, and so the great tragic actress naturally exclaimed, "How gat he there?"

And so, too, all the time I was listening to this gentleman's objurgations, I was saying to myself, "How gat you there? What Minister originally took you out of the ruck of men?" I say originally, because when once a man has got anything, he rises afterwards by a kind of routine, in parliamentary official life, as well as in the permanent civil service.



And then I thought of Milverton. He once wrote a story—the best thing he ever did write, to my mind. By the way, he will not live in future days by anything he has written that the public has read as his; but if he does survive in men's minds it will be by some obscure thing he has written, which neither he nor the public has taken any account of.

*Milverton.* Thank you, Ellesmere!

*Ellesmere.* Oh, where was I?

*Milverton.* That's so like Ellesmere; he has often so many persons on his hands to attack—in this case the croupier, the refreshment girl, the Under-Secretary, the Minister who first noticed him, and my unfortunate self—that he hardly knows where he is, and whom he is mauling.

*Ellesmere.* Oh, yes: I know where I was. Milverton wrote a story about some people who were always obliged to speak the truth when it was dark. I began to fear that I was one of these people. It was a November day when I saw the Under-Secretary, and, though only four o'clock (I was on my way to the House), the shades of evening were coming on. A nervous dread seized me lest I should be obliged to tell my thoughts, and ask the Under-Secretary, "How gat you there?" I hurriedly took my departure.

That man was the rudest of the three.

But, seriously speaking—for I mean that all my stories should bear closely on the subject—this illustrates what I mean.

These three people were probably pedants. The croupier had a pedantic idea of acquaintanceship—the Under-Secretary of official work—the refreshment-girl about giving refreshments. I have no doubt I did something that was out of due course: asked for coffee at a wrong time,

or committed some solecism in refreshment manners. I daresay they were all pedants, but they were ill-conditioned people too. Pedantry is not so harmful as you would make out ; and besides, you often mistake a necessary preciseness, or an inevitable division of labour, for mere pedantry.

*Sir Arthur.* I really think that, when a man has written his own epitaph, it indicates a great desire on his part for rest and quietness. I am sure, therefore, that Sir John will be very much obliged to me if I take up the running in his stead, and offer what few objections occur to me.

I think you are all too much inclined to look at what is physical. What you have said about houses is very good ; but, really, man is too great a creature to be made very comfortable merely by comfortable houses. I like best what Milverton said about social and domestic intercourse.

How many human beings, Mr. Cranmer, were there found to be in the British Islands on the occasion of the last census ?

*Cranmer.* 29,423,628 ; I know you will believe in my odd figures.

*Sir Arthur.* Divide that number roughly by four, and it will come to something like 7,000,000. I have no doubt, then, that there are, at this moment, 7,000,000 of misunderstandings in the British Isles. You know what I mean by misunderstandings ;—that A thinks that he has reason to think that B thinks meanly of him ; and that B thinks that C said something very unkind about him behind his back ; and that E is sure that F has prejudiced G against him, for G has never been so friendly with him since he (G) made F's acquaintance ; and so it goes on, through innumerable alphabets. Now this habit of self-tormenting might be considerably diminished by judicious

education. Here is a thing, too, for preachers to preach against.

*Milverton.* The mischief chiefly arises from a kind of modesty—from a keen sense in most people of their own shortcomings and deficiencies. If people would only exercise their imagination in imagining that others think as well and as kindly of them (and this is surely not a great stretch of imagination) as they do of these others, the world would be a much more comfortable place to live in. The agonies that sensitive people invent—no, absolutely create—for themselves are as astounding in magnitude as they are ingenious in conception. I have seen the tears start into the eyes of a child on its being called by some new name of affection which it did not understand. Now, though a very humble, what a striking instance this is of the misery of misunderstanding!

*Sir Arthur.* A great French writer, I think it was Eugène Sue, said, "*Tout pardonner, c'est tout comprendre.*" I would rather he had turned it the other way, and had said, "*Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner.*" For, in truth, one would never be angry with anybody, if one understood him or her thoroughly. Now there is not time to understand them thoroughly. One must trust a great deal to the imagination: and therefore, I say, educate the imagination to believe that people are saying many favourable things of John behind his back.<sup>1</sup>

*Ellesmere.* I know a John who never indulges in this fond imagination, and yet does not make himself very

<sup>1</sup> I did not understand this expression, but afterwards found out that it was anciently a way by which a man delicately alluded to favourable things that had been said about himself, "*Dicebant multa favorabilia de Johanne.*"

miserable by fretting over what he imagines people may be saying of him.

*Sir Arthur.* I was going on to say that we do not make enough of, or give sufficient encouragement to, pleasantness in people. I know I am only saying here what Milverton would say, and indeed what he has said elsewhere ; but I do not think he gave the just weight to such topics in his speech, and that he, like the rest of you, dwelt too much on material comforts. He led you from the senate or the school to the social circle and the home ; but I want to deal with the man himself, and with his modes of thought, if I am to make him "comfortable." And I believe that a great deal can be done by training, especially by early training, to habituate our minds to "comfortable" modes of thought.

To illustrate how rare a thing is pleasantness of demeanour. I knew a lady who received, as it is called, London society very extensively. This lady was a comely, cosy woman, "fair, fat, and forty," and one of those persons in whom others inevitably confide, and to whom they come and tell their grievances.

One day I was alone with her, when she began to talk of her experience of the world. I listened very attentively.

"Now, as regards you men," she said, "what a number of clever and intelligent men there are ! A clever man is no rarity ! Also, what a number of good people there are ; people (perhaps of rough, queer, awkward exterior) who gave no sign of their goodness and kindheartedness, but who, on the contrary, 'from the cradle to the grave,' are misunderstood ; and who are very cross, too, at being misunderstood, when it is really their own fault, or rather the fault of their training. But if you want to know what is a rarity among men, it is a pleasant man—one who is safe, who never makes, nor takes, needless offence ; who brings out the best points

of other people. I assure you, Sir Arthur, when one has to give many parties, one learns to value such persons very much, and to discern that they are highly gifted."

I never forgot this conversation, and have ever since been looking about for pleasant people. The lady was quite right : they are the rarities. Double their number, and the world would be much more "comfortable."

Now, don't come down upon me by saying that a man must be somewhat false, or too much given to assent to everything that everybody says, in order to be a pleasant companion. Falseness, or insincere assent, is immediately perceived, and destroys pleasantness of intercourse, instead of creating it. But a pleasant man can dissent from you heartily and earnestly, without giving the least cause for offence. Of course no man is pleasant who is not truthful. Now a disagreeable man will often dissent from you from the mere love of opposition, and you do not call that untruthful, whereas it is the essence of falsehood, and you never know what the man's opinions really are, because he is so given to object to everything that anybody else says.

*Milverton.* I agree with every word you say, Sir Arthur ; but do not blame me for not having introduced all these things into my speech ; if I had done so, I should have spoken from breakfast-time till dinner-time.

*Ellesmere.* I must revive, and return to this dull earth ; for I have something very good to say. I object to a species of ill-natured ridicule which is very rife in these days, and which goes by the vulgar name of "chaff." I have heard the most ill-natured things said chaffingly.

*Mauleverer.* Well ! If I ever !

*Sir Arthur.* Upon my word, Ellesmere, we must revert to the Latin of your epitaph, and exclaim :—" *Quis tulerit Ellesmere, de chaffatione querentem.*"

*Ellesmere.* And I must revert to what you say about misunderstandings. I will knock off, at once, some four or five units from your seven millions of misunderstandings, for I daresay there are four or five foolish people who misunderstand me. Cranmer did, for one ; but that's all over. I never say anything that can hurt anybody of any sense. Half an hour ago, I said something to Milverton about his works which might be taken to be an unpleasant saying, whereas it was a high compliment ; delicately veiled, I admit, but still a high compliment. Other people valued his well-known works ; I, for my part, delight most in those which are at present obscure. All my *displiments* (if I may coin a word for the occasion) are (when unmasked) highly complimentary.

*Lady Ellesmere.* There never were masks, then, so like real flesh and blood.

*Ellesmere.* It is very kind of you, my lady, to point out how well the thing is done, and that the deception is so like real life ; and yet, as I contend, it does not deceive anybody. The birds do not come and peck at my picture : they merely say to one another, " How well Sir John paints his cherries ! It is quite a treat to look at them."

Now, for goodness' sake do admit that there is a gulf so wide between fun and ill-nature that no Curtius can fill it up. Don't think you are going to make men comfortable by making them dull.

*Mauleverer.* I am going to have my "innings" now, and I shall presume to take you back to a very grave part of the subject. You may try to improve individual men as much as you like, but I can tell you that they will always be little, spiteful, vain, sensitive, backbiting creatures.

Now I think you may possibly do something to make governments wiser, and so improve the comfort of mankind. I do not wish to be censorious, but the statesmen of

modern days do not seem to me to be well educated for statesmanship—to be well grounded in the things it most behoves them to know. A signal proof of this seems to me to be, that all great measures are carried by the very men who began by opposing them. I will not use the ugly words “renegades” and “apostates,” but, to use parliamentary language, I will say that the best measures are carried by gentlemen “who have seen reason, and are not ashamed to own it, for greatly modifying their opinions on this important subject,” which generally means that they have come right round.

I know full well that to make too much of mere consistency is a great mistake ; but it does occur to me as a subject of regret, that statesmen should not have apprehended the drift of certain main lines of policy. Now I must speak a little egotistically, but it will illustrate what I mean. When I was a young man, and thought it likely that I should some day or other be in parliament, the great noise was beginning to be made about Free-trade and the Corn-laws. I said to myself, I will study these questions for myself : and I did study them carefully. I came to the conclusion, which was not particularly welcome to me, that the principles of Free-trade must prevail, and that the Corn-laws must be abolished. Now, really, I cannot help giving myself, and others who did as I did, more credit for statesmanlike views than those men who filled a much greater place in the world, but who seemed to be very deaf to sound reasoning, and never to have looked into things for themselves. I cannot respect them so much for their inconsistency, whatever merit it may have, as I should have done for their sagacity, if they had been consistently right from the first.

Another point has struck me about statesmen. Some-

times they do not seem to be equal to the clever men outside, or even to the general body of ordinary men, for that is the point. A Cabinet, perhaps consisting of really clever men, puts forth something which gods, men, and omnibus drivers protest against, not only as a thing bad in itself, but which has also this disadvantage, that it cannot possibly be carried. That good sense which forms the best part of what we call "the public mind," seems sometimes to have no representatives amongst even first-class statesmen. This has really puzzled me. I am not speaking satirically at all, but very earnestly, and I hope humbly. Do explain this phenomenon to me.

*Cranmer.* Let me answer him. You seem to forget, Mauleverer, that these things you object to, which are put forth by statesmen, and which, as you say, are discovered to be foolish, even by commonplace persons, are the results of compromise. Now, every compromise is easily attackable. Your commonplace man has nobody whom he is obliged to consult. His views are therefore uncompromising and clear. You would see what modifications he would have to make if he had to act with others, instead of merely talking out his own views, upon his own responsibility alone.

*Sir Arthur.* It seems but fair to consider this.

*Milverton.* Still, does there not remain an important residuum of truth in what Mr. Mauleverer has stated?

*Sir Arthur.* Perhaps ; but much less, I think, than you imagine.

*Lady Ellesmere.* Now may I not take up the running, or have the innings, to use the elegant phrases which you gentlemen adopt, and make my comment upon the speech?

How was it, Leonard, that you did not say anything about marriage, upon which, surely, so much of comfort or discomfort depends?



*Milverton.* My dear Mildred, are you going to be unreasonable too, like the rest of them? To discourse properly on such a subject would have required a long speech, and who is to make such a speech? An unmarried man cannot, for want of experience, and a married man will not; consequently there has been very little written or said about marriage, if we except Jeremy Taylor's celebrated sermon, which is worth listening to.

I will tell you something which occurs to me, but it has reference to love-making rather than to marriage. I think that some of you women make a point of being too reserved and too reticent in the expression of your feelings, or rather of neglecting to give any intimation of what those feelings might be; and so, many a marriage, that might have proved very happy, has been prevented.

*Ellesmere.* I quite agree with Milverton that, considering the greater natural modesty and timidity of men, women should make more of an advance than they do. What would have become of me if Mildred had not been somewhat different from the rest of her sex? You know how it all happened?

"Johnny!" she said (I did think that a little familiar, and that she might have contented herself with "John"), "Johnny! you are intolerable to most men, and nearly to all women; but you are not so very intolerable to me. I don't mind, if you don't. Pegotty is willing."

What could I do, but close at once with the proposition, and say, "Barkis is willing, and has been for many a long day"? And so it ended; no, it didn't end there; I always do what the books tell me to do—I believe in books—and so down I knelt and kissed her hand. And here we are, not more miserable than other married people. Oh, it's a capital instance of the advantage of women coming forward.

Speaking on the part of men, having received a "brief," marked with a large fee, and intituled "Mankind in general v. Mauleverer and Others," I say we should not mind at all if women would take the leading part in love affairs.

*Lady Ellesmere.* I think I need not contradict this statement. The Court is too well aware of my learned friend's power of statement, which is nearly equal in truth and accuracy to his "powerful singing." Johnny's audacity (I suppose I may call him Johnny now) is too well known for it to be supposed that it was wanting to him on any occasion. Their lordships, I am sure, are so far with me.

*Milverton.* Have you anything to say, Johnson? for, if not, I shall commence my speech in reply.

*Johnson.* I have something to say, but it is not quite relevant to the subject.

*Ellesmere.* Say it, Sandy. Hang relevancy and consistency, and all other strait-laced inventions for tying up the tongues of men.

*Johnson.* No, I shall postpone it to another time.

*Milverton.* Have you anything you wish to say, Blanche?

*Mrs. Milverton.* No, dear; I agree, chiefly, with what Sir Arthur has said.

*Milverton.* Then, I suppose, I may commence my reply.

In the first place, Ellesmere sneered at me about repetition.

[I did not hear Sir John say anything of the kind : I suppose it was an aside.]

I shall begin with a story.

I was travelling with one of the leading men of the extreme Liberal party in Ireland, a man of great eloquence, and it was at a time when O'Connell was in full force, and

creating immense agitation for repeal. "What a great man he is!" said my friend. "Is there any man who can repeat the same thing over and over again in the way that he does? You do not see the greatness that there is in that. If you or I, poor creatures, were to have said the same thing once or twice, however appropriate, should we not be too shamefaced to say it again?"—

'Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not,  
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?'

Now, could you 'hereditary bondsmen' them more than once or twice in your life? You know you couldn't. Whereas O'Connell can and will do so a hundred times. Those lines exactly convey his meaning, and he is not going to waste his time in searching for what would be sure to do not quite so well."

What my Irish friend said made a deep impression upon me, and when I am drawing back from a word, or a phrase, or a sentiment, merely because I have said it once or twice before, I mutter to myself, "Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not?" and on I go with my word or my phrase, which happens to suit me now as it suited me before. Have I not answered you, Master Ellesmere?

[Ellesmere made a shrug of negation, but said nothing.]

I should like now to add a few words in explanation of my speech. I do not think I made very clear what I meant by unreasonable conservatism. I will give an instance. A man who has given considerable attention to the poor, and has been noted for benevolence, tells me that it would be an immense advantage if wages were paid in the middle of the week instead of at the end. I

thought I knew something about this matter, but when I came to talk with this man, I found there were advantages, in the plan he proposed, that had entirely escaped me. Look, for instance, how much longer time the poor woman would have for laying out her husband's wages to advantage. Whereas, under the present system of paying on a Saturday, she has scarcely any choice given her; for recollect that Sunday is the feast day: the day for which meat is bought.

Then another thing that you would never have thought of is, that no extra blaze of gas would be brought on, like there now is on a Saturday night, for the purpose of selling an inferior article under the deceiving influence of that extra light. Well, this man had two great establishments; one in town, and one in the country. At one he succeeded, but at the other conservatism, as he told me, was too strong for him.

Now, take another instance,—the locking of the doors of railway carriages. I never met with a man who could give me valid reasons for the continuance of that practice that almost everybody wishes to be discontinued. I believe that the reason mainly adduced for the practice is, that some madman might jump out while the train is in motion. But what a one-sided madman he must be, for the doors are only locked on one side. Bring the people of England to the poll on this question, and not one in one hundred thousand would vote for this locking up—except, perhaps, the madmen. They might naturally enough vote with the directors.

But the thing having been done once, irrational conservatism comes in, and years pass away before the thing can be undone.

Take another instance,—we mend our roads with rough

stones, and omit to press them down properly. This injures our horses, spoils our carriage-wheels, and annoys ourselves; and, moreover, is a great detriment to the road. But to bring a heavy roller over these stones would be a Whig-Radical device, and irrational conservatism shudders at it.

Now I come to Sir Arthur's remarks. Of course, if it had been an essay or a speech chiefly directed to the government of the man's own mind, I should have dwelt much more upon the art of making men more comfortable in their minds. I should have mentioned, for instance, what I have said before, about the folly of hating, and of imagining evils for, others, upon this ground alone, that, exercise your imagination as much as you will, you cannot imagine anything which is sure to do your enemy, if you are stupid enough and extravagant enough to indulge in such a luxury as an enemy, any harm.

I should have endeavoured to deal with envy and jealousy in a similar way: but I was not speaking about the passions, but about the possible comforts of mankind.

Finally, I should like to say something more about communism. I fear I shall be misunderstood in what I said about that. I do certainly think that some of the advantages which communists aim at might be gained by central government, which, in my judgment, is bound to undertake that good for individuals which they cannot possibly compass by individual exertion.

But now, following the line of Sir Arthur, I will show that there is a much larger and higher communism in my mind—the communism of sympathy that should pervade all classes.

What is the great misery of each individual man? Isolation. "No losses but of my making, no tears but of my

shedding," says Shylock, being himself, partly from his own fault, and partly from the fault of cruel prejudices, one of the most isolated of beings.

You all know those words in the "Flauto Magico" which I admire so much. I have often repeated them to you, and ("Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not?") I shall repeat them again. The words which please me most are—

"Fra noi ciascun divide  
L' affanno ed il piacer."

What a comfort it would be to human life if men felt they could divide their sorrows with other men, and how willingly they would then allow those others to partake their joys! Of course, I know that, upon this earth, such a state of things is impossible. The only approach that can be made to it is by sympathy, and sympathy must grow with knowledge. Changing and enlarging a little your French proverb, I would say—" *Tout comprendre c'est tout aimer.*"

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We dined together, and everybody tried, at least everybody except Sir John Ellesmere, to make the evening go off cheerfully; but it was manifestly an effort, and the wheels "drave heavily." It was in vain that Mr. Milverton, playing the part of a good host, threw out topics of conversation, chiefly political. Sir John gave short, snappish answers, which led to nothing.

When we had left the table, and had drawn round the fire, there was a heavy silence for a minute or two, which was at last broken by Sir John.

*Ellesmere.* No, I will not come again ; it is such a detestable thing, the breaking-up. Nothing is worth it.

I will come and see you, Milverton, if you are in trouble or ill, but I will not assist any more at these pleasant meetings.

What did Dr. Johnson say when he went over Garrick's cheerful house, and saw Garrick's pleasant, comely wife, and Garrick's well-chosen furniture? It was something of this sort :—" Oh, Davy, Davy, these are the things [which make it so terrible to die !"—and parting is a kind of death.

Now there is Sir Arthur. I knew him to be a great writer and a great politician, but I did not know that he was such a good fellow, and that he would endure the impertinences of a certain flippant lawyer, presuming to chaff him (shall I admit the word "chaff"?) about "The True," "The Good," and "The Beautiful."

And then there is Cranmer. Who would have thought that an ex-Secretary of the Treasury would be so tolerant of such an unofficial-minded man as I am? And then, Mauleverer,—I now know that he has a large soul, and am sure that he likes me better than any turtle ;—and Sandy, there ; what a clever boy he is ! Have I not taught him many athletic sports—such as fishing, and making ducks and drakes on the water? And I am very sorry to part from him, too. I hate parting, that's a fact ! and I am not such a hypocrite and impostor as, like the rest of you, to pretend to be very cheerful this evening.

By the way, having mentioned Garrick's wife reminds me of something. With my fear of any great felicity in this world, and my horror of having to part from it, I almost wish I had never seen Mildred. She has made life too agreeable to me. Now then, dear, have I not said a thing which compensates for all rude speeches, past, present, and to come?

[It is always very difficult to know how far Sir John is in earnest. I think there was a touch of earnestness in that last sentence of his. Lady Ellesmere evidently thought so, too. In that beautiful woman's eyes there came that mist which rises before tears, or upon the conquest and suppression of tears, and which gives the deepest and tenderest expression to a face. She stole her hand into his; but said nothing. Sir John continued—:]

Talking of "The Comfortable," there is one comfort in having a wife, that one can throw one's packing upon her; and, as no true woman can refuse a good opportunity for making a fuss, she is sure to delight in it. To-morrow is Sunday, and we start early on Monday; so, my dear, you really must set to work now. Remember to return those books of Milverton's that we have carried off into our room, or my epi— Don't look so reproachful, my dear. Do you know, Milverton, our wives are angry with us: yours because you said it was your last essay; and mine, because I wrote a posthumous account of myself. You silly thing! it does not make one die a bit the sooner; and as for you, Blanche, Milverton's threat of its being the last essay is merely a sign of increased liveliness, and a decent way of informing us that he is coming out next season with renewed vigour. Do Ministers always mean to resign when they threaten to do so?

No, don't go just yet. I will give you a good winding up of all our writing and talking. Do you remember the concluding chapter of *Rasselas*, "in which nothing is concluded"? I will give you my version of it as applicable to ourselves. It is as follows:—

It rained incessantly (that is, it did yesterday), and the



Friends in Council were confined to the house. A juicy day in the country promotes meditation of the most serious kind; and they had ample time to think over and to communicate to each other the various schemes of happiness which each of them had formed.

Mr. Cranmer thought that, of all sublunary things, taxation was the prettiest. He desired to found a state where the people would pay their taxes gladly, and where financial statements made by the Government would be universally believed in.

Mr. Mauleverer sought to enrol himself in a community where every man, woman, and child should know how thoroughly and hopelessly miserable he or she is, and where a joke should be a crime punishable by instant death.

Sir Arthur maintained that a perception of "The Beautiful" would, of itself, render all people sufficiently happy; but his wanderings from Mesopotamia to Yucatan had only brought him in contact with coarse people, who seemed more intent upon "The Beefy" than "The Beautiful."

Mr. Milverton desired a kingdom in which right reason—that is to say, his own ideas—should always prevail. He had carefully fixed the limits of this kingdom; but could never find anybody worthy to be an inhabitant of it except himself and his private secretary, Sandy Johnson.

Mr. Alexander Johnson thought that literature was the salt of life, and that any man who had written a book must be very wise and very good. Some converse, however, with men who had written books, induced him greatly to modify this opinion; and he was now inclined to maintain that the northern part of each community contained all the worth, and wit, and wisdom of the land, and that

the universe, to be well governed, should chiefly be ruled over by Scotchmen.

Mrs. Milverton desired to find—that greatest of household treasures—a good cook, with a good temper.

Lady Ellesmere proposed to form a female community, herself to be the head of it, where, freed from the turbulence of men, gentle means should be employed for the attainment of generous ends, and where rationality of enjoyment should be the just reward of perspicuity of design; but, never having been for any ten minutes alone with other women, without finding their society rather dull, she was beginning to conclude that men, as well as wasps, must have their place in creation (though she could not quite see why) and must be endured as necessary evils.

Sir John Ellesmere was contented to be driven along the stream of life without expecting to find anybody much wiser, more judicious, or less unreasonable than himself.

Of the many discussions and deliberations in which the "Friends" had been involved, they were now aware that some of them were wise, and that some of them were inept. Of the opinions they had pronounced, the precepts they had urged, the suggestions they had presumed to offer for the benefit—as they had been pleased to fancy—of mankind, reflection taught them that those which were the utterances of folly would be readily adopted by the common nonsense of their fellow-men; while such—alas, but few!—as were the dictates of sound wisdom would mostly be devoid of growth in the shallow soil upon which such seeds are, of necessity, scattered by the sower. Rejoicing in the thought that, if their lucubrations would do no good, at any rate they would cause but little harm—for the world is so full of foolishness that if a new folly is introduced it must

performe expel some other folly—the Friends in Council resolved, if the train should not break down, to return to their smoke-stained habitations in the “unlovely” precincts of modern Babylon.

After this there was much humorous conversation, everybody, except Mrs. Milverton and Mr. Cranmer, protesting that their views and hopes had been grossly misrepresented by Sir John Ellesmere. We then separated for the night; and I have nothing further to relate respecting our sojourn during the holidays at Worth-Ashton.

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And now I must say a word or two for myself. I may not always have set forth accurately the conversations which I have undertaken to record. I may not even have chosen the most interesting of them. I am very young, but I think I am not unobservant; and the love I have had from my childhood for investigating character may have been useful to me in this instance. I hope it may have been so. But, at any rate, I have done my best, and can only hope that what I have done will not be received with disfavour by the public.

